

***Shadow Foreign Policy:  
The Relationship of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany  
and the Socialist Unity Party of East Germany  
and the Negotiations Surrounding the "Common Dialogue,"  
1984-1987***

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Foreign policy formulation and implementation is, for the most part, associated within the parameters of an executive centered examination. Moreover, foreign policy, when it deals with a political party, is nearly always explored within the confines of a party in government. There are, however, circumstances that challenge both of these premises. The German political system allows for a substantial influence of political parties in foreign affairs as well as the leverage of opposition parties in influencing foreign policy of the government. Given the particular character of the German political system, political parties there have been able to influence foreign policy much more than those of other Western European nation-states. This thesis examines the influence of the Social Democratic Party of West Germany (SPD) on foreign policy and the party's attempt to practice foreign policy while in opposition.

During the mid-1980s, the West German Social Democratic Party conducted negotiations and produced three joint proposals with the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED). This thesis specifically examines these three joint proposals, known as the "Common Dialogue," produced by the two parties from the years 1984 to 1987. The first two SPD-SED proposals relate to security affairs and attempt to create a chemical and a nuclear weapons free zone in Central Europe. The third proposal formulated a set of ideological norms in order to establish a political "culture of dispute" in which opposing Eastern and Western viewpoints could be argued without the threat of conflict. The SPD's intention was to put pressure on its own government as well to pressure the military blocs with the aim of replacing the established practice of deterrence with the new concept of "common security."

This thesis explores the formation of Social Democratic policy towards Eastern Europe. It begins with an examination of the government of Willy Brandt and *Ostpolitik* (Eastern policy) and analyzes the factors involved in the creation of the party's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* in the 1980s, under the influence of a new generation of leaders. In particular, it examines the formation of Egon Bahr's concept of "common security." The latter half of this thesis examines the impact of the SPD-SED relationship on the reform process in East Germany and the reunification of Germany. Significantly, the intense debate in Germany regarding the influence of the SPD-SED relationship is drawn between two opposing viewpoints. On one hand, the SPD argues that its past policies encouraged a peaceful incorporation of the two Germanies; and on the other hand, critics argue that the SPD-SED contacts simply legitimized the totalitarian state's existence. This thesis attempts to answer these questions, bring this subject to an English speaking audience, and place the SPD-SED relationship in proper perspective.



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**Introduction: Political Parties and Foreign Policy**

Foreign policy formulation and its implementation is, for the most part, associated within the parameters of an executive centered examination.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, foreign policy, when it deals with a political party, is nearly always explored within the confines of a party in government. However, there are circumstances that challenge both of these premises. For example, the German political system allows for a substantial influence of political parties in foreign affairs as well as the leverage of opposition parties in influencing foreign policy of the government. For the purposes of this thesis, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and its impact on foreign policy, while in opposition, will be explored.

Given the particular character of the German political system, political parties have been able to influence foreign policy much more than other western European nation-states. William E. Paterson explains the rationale for this argument with a number of general factors.

First of all, the former Federal Republic of Germany<sup>2</sup> was created by the external requirements of foreign states and thus political parties in West Germany operated in a "penetrated" political system.<sup>3</sup> As a result, political parties have "habitually" concentrated on foreign policy. Furthermore, West German relations with other states have depended on continuous defining and redefining of its nature with other nations in the form of treaties. Because "treaty politics" have been

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 228.

<sup>2</sup>The reference to the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany or West Germany, in this respect, represents the federal system founded in 1949 until the reunification of Germany in 1990; albeit, the basics and the significance of the system in relation to political parties has not been affected since reunification.

<sup>3</sup>William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 227.



significantly ideological, political parties have played a large role in their formulation. For example, the SPD opposition opposed the treaties by the CDU/CSU with the West in the 1950s, and the CDU/CSU opposition opposed the treaties by the SPD with the East in the late 1960s and 1970s; both parties, whilst in opposition, opposed the treaties on ideological grounds. It is this significant ideological opposition which allows for an examination into the political parties and foreign policy. Moreover, the culminating example of ideological inter-party debate surrounded the 1990 treaty on the reunification of the two Germanies which, as will be shown, not only distinguished the policies of the Federal government from that of the SPD, but also revealed the struggle within the SPD on the question of the German nation itself.

The federal system in Germany requires, moreover, that cooperation on domestic policy between the government and the *Länder* (states) occur. Because of the consensual and technical character of this process, political parties have often been able to concentrate on external policy as well. Finally, given the close relationship of the federal government with political parties, whether as a coalition partner or simply as the opposition, the tendency for a wide range of bureaucratic polemics is manifested more often than not.

There are four ways in which political parties have been able to influence foreign policy formulation in Germany: (i) recruitment; (ii) adopting specific policies which when in power, the party leaders will feel obligated to adopt; (iii) putting pressure on the government; (iv) influencing thought and discussion.<sup>4</sup> However, specific to this study, the SPD also attempted to influence thought and discussion externally as well; i.e., by attempting to influence the leadership in the Soviet Union as well as in East Germany in an attempt to bring about democratic reform.

Vital for an understanding of the motives of the Social Democrats in opposition in the 1980s, is an understanding of the integration forces that the party has had in the area of foreign policy. "Foreign policy has been a source of a major cleavage in the West German party system and a major element of integration in individual political parties."<sup>5</sup> For example, the foreign policy of Konrad Adenauer (CDU)

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



not only integrated the CDU/CSU by the summer of 1960 but also the SPD and FDP as well. Moreover, *Ostpolitik* singularly integrated the SPD/FDP coalition under the leadership of Willy Brandt. Furthermore, it served as major source of integration among the population of West Germany during the late 1960s and 1970s generally.<sup>6</sup> This success of *Ostpolitik* directly influenced the policies of the SPD after 1983 as the party was thrust into opposition.

Historically, ideology often determines party positions in Germany and when used effectively, foreign policy beliefs can determine electoral outcomes. Thus, political parties in Germany have attempted to structure the vote, and integrate public opinion around foreign policy issues which is unusual in comparative terms. Electoral concern has been a determining factor in relation to the SPD's *Deutschlandpolitik* (inter-German policy) and *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy),<sup>7</sup> both before *die Wende* (turning point) of 1982 and after.<sup>8</sup> Yet, as will be illustrated, ideology within the SPD contributed in large part to the policies of the party in the 1980s and beyond.

The West German Social Democrats (SPD) labeled their new security policy of the 1980s the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. It was different from the *Ostpolitik* (eastern policy) of the 1960s and 1970s, however. Unlike *Ostpolitik's* first phase under the Grand Coalition (1966-1969) and Willy Brandt's coalition with the Free Democrats (FDP) (1969-1974), this new policy broke with the past and Chancellor Schmidt's (1974-1982) acceptance of NATO and West European unity, leading promptly to the fall of the SPD-FDP government in October 1982. Yet, the

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<sup>6</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Ostpolitik and Regime Stability in West Germany" in R. Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, pp. 23-45; noted in op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>7</sup>For the purposes of this dissertation, the reference to *Deutschlandpolitik* and *Ostpolitik* will occasionally be noted together. Indeed, the two terms have come to be used interchangeably (discussion with William E. Paterson, Edinburgh, 25 January 1995). Moreover, the significance of the two terms are clearly more interrelated than the indication of the translations suggests. From the late 1960s, inter-German politics became inextricably bound up in relations with the Soviet Union and even other Eastern powers.

<sup>8</sup>The electoral process of Germany is significantly affected by the foreign policy positions of political parties. For example, in the election of 1972 (the last successful federal election of the SPD), foreign policy had a decisive impact on the electoral outcome. Moreover, foreign policy plays a more important role than in other West European elections; See R. Irving and William E. Paterson, "The West German Parliamentary Election of November 1972," *Parliamentary Affairs*, no. 1., 1973, pp. 218-39; and William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 232.



"second phase" was not revival of Kurt Schumacher's policies either.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, the SPD's new policy accepted the status of a divided Germany. Ironically, the policy combined the resentment of Western dominance coupled with the recognition of a divided Germany. Thus the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was primarily concerned with issues of security. Its long-range goals included a denuclearized Europe, and a replacement of the enemy image (*Feindbild*) of East Germany through negotiations and contractual agreements.

This "second phase" centered around a new security concept: the replacement of the Soviet Union as the principal threat to NATO by a "security partnership" (*Sicherheitspartnerschaft*) with Moscow. Thus implemented by the SPD in party-to-party negotiations with the ruling Communist parties of the Soviet Union and the East European members of the Warsaw Pact, in order to intensify arms control negotiations and economic, ecological, and cultural relations between the two halves of Europe.

Among the "second phase's" operational aims was first a gradual replacement of nuclear deterrence by a West European "structural inability to attack" (*strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*) (i.e. a purely defensive, conventional strategy). The second aim was the intensification of arms control negotiations on nuclear arms in

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<sup>9</sup>The foreign policy advocated by the SPD cannot be separated from its commitment to a democratic socialist Germany. This commitment was personified by the dedication of the party's first post-war leader, Kurt Schumacher. His goal was to create a "democratic state with a socialist content." The SPD's policies in the first postwar years were crippled by pursuit of goals that were rendered mutually exclusive by the international situation. The SPD saw unity as a precondition for peace. Therefore, it pursued unity indefatigably without being willing to sacrifice freedom. These goals were contradictory in that the Soviet Union held the key to reunification and was not willing to accept the Social Democratic definition of freedom as the basis for unity. The goal of independence and freedom to create a new social order in Germany was closely linked to the goal of German unity; yet, there was a realistic political element to the SPD's commitment to "state unity" beyond the ideological rationale. This political basis for commitment to reunification had three principal elements. First, there was a demographic factor. The strongest areas of SPD strength lay in the Soviet zone of occupation and the territories "administered by Poland." The party's leadership was predominantly East German. In a united Germany the party would have a larger plurality and perhaps an absolute majority. Economically, the party feared that, deprived of the eastern bread basket, the economic development of the country, upon which the evolution and security of democracy depended, would be crippled. Finally, they feared that a divided Germany would become a cause for revanchism, which would be internally destructive to democracy and externally disruptive of peace. In Social Democratic theory, a united, democratic Germany was the foundation for a "United States of Europe." Within this new state system, nationalism and internationalism would be reconciled. For an in-depth view of Schumacher's views, see Lewis Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher, A Study in Personality and Political Behavior*, 1965.

Europe, including initiatives toward the immediate goal of a nuclear-free zone on both sides of the inner-German border, and ultimately toward the denuclearization of all of Europe. Moreover there was a desire for negotiations with the Soviet and East European ruling parties especially with the East German Socialist Unity Party (SED). This desire was based on mutual interest in maintaining stability in Europe in order to lower the level of mutual polemics, negotiate draft treaties on chemical and nuclear-free zones, establish a security partnership, promote "common security" and thereby implement SPD foreign policy objectives and ultimately change the *status quo*.

### **Why Contacts?**

With the thawing of the general relations between the two Germanies in the late 1960s, and the prospect that the Social Democrats were willing to go beyond the limits of their old conceptions (or discard them, as was the case with the policies of Kurt Schumacher), it is easy to understand why the GDR leadership would have been enthused by the possibility of making the dynamics of West German party politics work to their advantage. Despite the fact that the CDU/CSU, whether in opposition or in power, would not match their rivals in the SPD, there was always the chance that all of the major parties in West Germany together would nevertheless be brought around to a minimal acceptance of the GDR's sovereignty and equality.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, prior to the dramatic denouement of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) deployment dispute in 1979 by a majority of Social Democrats, the inter-German dialogue was motivated mainly by the interest of the West German public and political leadership in improving the situation of their "fellow Germans" and in keeping the door open for an ultimate resolution of the German reunification issue; by East German interest in receiving the economic concessions the FRG was willing to make in order to achieve these objectives; and by the desire of the East German population to expand contacts with West Germans.

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<sup>10</sup>This minimal acceptance was actualized with Honeckers semi-official reception by the Federal government in 1987. William E. Paterson, 9 March 1995.



But after the INF talks broke down in 1983, the public in both German states saw the possible end of East-West arms control and the beginning of a new period of East-West tension which could culminate in conflict on German soil. These active apprehensions were diminished as the political leaders of both German states joined in an effort to protect the inter-German relationship with a pledge that not war, but peace, would come from German soil.<sup>11</sup>

With these statements, very strongly supported by public opinion in both parts of Germany, the pursuit of German national interests in the inter-German relationship were transformed and broadened to include the pursuit of peace. Actions to strengthen the inter-German relationship became at the same time German contributions to peace in the world, a contribution which all Germans were obligated by their historical past to make and which because of their situation only they could make. As the Federal German Ministry of Inner-German Relations put it "improved inner-German relations are at the same time a contribution to peace."<sup>12</sup> Tapping the peace dimension broadened and deepened the sustaining motivation of the inter-German relationship on the part of the public and political leaders in both German states.<sup>13</sup>

Jonathan Dean explains that there were sound practical reasons why the two German states, and especially the SPD, would wish to have some cooperation on security and arms control issues. During the time of a divided Germany, both German states had a more direct, if not a stronger, interest than other European states in acting to prevent war. They shared a "common knowledge of how Nazi Germany unleashed the Second World War and of the devastation and death which the war brought to Germans as well as to all of Europe. The bulk of foreign troops in the huge East-West military confrontation in Europe which emerged in the postwar period were deployed on their territories; their populations would suffer most directly in the event of conflict in Europe, when the armies of each would be called on to shoot down their countrymen."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>12</sup>Press and Information of the Federal German Government, *Jahresbericht der Bundesregierung*, 1986, Bonn, p. 283.

<sup>13</sup>Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, p. 161.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 163.

As many Germans saw it, they were firmly imbedded in their respective alliances to hold to a minimum their capacity to initiate conflict, but they would at the same time have been primary victims of conventional, chemical or nuclear war. Both Germanies, Dean explains, had a common interest in promoting good relations between Washington and Moscow, perhaps by helping to resolve some of the issues which divided the two great powers. In light of the decline in American and Soviet power relative to Western, and even Eastern, Europe, they were less concerned than were Chancellor Adenauer and the former East German leader Walter Ulbricht over possible domination of Europe through excessively close cooperation between the two great powers. At the same time, they were more concerned about the degree of their dependence on the two great powers. In theory, this broad parallelism of security interests was furthered by the Social Democrats by deliberately intensifying the scope of discussion of arms control and security issues.<sup>15</sup> The principal factor involved a shift from the fear of invasion from the East to a fear of nuclear war between them. Thus for the SPD, the only avenue to securing peace was through cooperation between the blocs and the development of East-West and inter-German security discussions.

## **Examination**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the contacts between the Social Democrats and the ruling East German government, specifically, but not exclusively during the 1980s, and to examine the opportunities and limitations of political parties in opposition in relation to foreign policy. This topic has been chosen because of its wider implications in post-war German politics. A study into the relations between these parties has significance to, and comprises more than simply a study in inter-German relations referred to as *Deutschlandpolitik*. It comprises topics of vital interest to German, European, and international scholars as well. This thesis embarks on a pursuit to bring to an English speaking audience details regarding *Ostpolitik*, the German identity question, and inter-German relations under the leadership of Brandt and bring the notion of *Ostpolitik* forward in order to understand the Social Democrat's policies of the 1980s and their impact on reunification. The ramifications of the Social Democratic initiatives in inter-German relations during the 1980s are still being felt in Germany today and the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 163-164.



political transformation of the SPD throughout its post-war history has become a topic of both scholarly and ideological discussion in Germany. Most importantly, the position of the SPD in the 1980s directly lead to the ambivalent position of the party in the dramatic events of 1989 and 1990. Thus reunification was an enigmatic phenomenon for the Social Democrats because of their prior relationship with the East German Government. The Union parties in government were in a novel position to gain politically and electorally *vis à vis* the opposition because of this.

Because of this topical and indeed heated debate in Germany, as part of a wider debate on the opposition party's *Janusköpfigkeit* (two-headed approach) towards the East,<sup>16</sup> both in the 1980s and 1990s, it is quite surprising that so little is specifically written on the contacts as a whole.<sup>17</sup> It is the author's view that these contacts exhibit much more than merely an appropriate, on one hand, or misguided, on the other, attempt on behalf of the SPD to lessen tensions (*Entspannung*) in Europe, as is the debate today. By creating a reform discussion both within the SED (especially in certain lower circles) and outside of it, it contributed to the fall of the GDR. Yet, at the same time, this very rumoring gave the people within and outside the SED the impression that it was capable of reform, which, it is safe in to say, it was not, and so perhaps prolonged the GDR's existence. This thesis will justify these claims by an analysis of the specific

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<sup>16</sup>Gesine Schwan (SPD), critical of the SPD-SED contacts, first coined this description in her article "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen," in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 September 1987.

<sup>17</sup>To call the SPD-SED paper and its impact *janusköpfig*, janus-headed, referring to the fact that it both stabilized and helped to bring down the old GDR regime, would not be entirely accurate. Both in German and in English, the term refers to something that has a good and a bad side; to a person or to an act that has two faces. (The Roman god Janus quite literally had two faces - one facing inside, one facing outside; one facing the past, one facing the future.) This is what John Dryden means when he calls Shakespeare "the very Janus of poets" (in the *Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age*); it is a Jekyll-and-Hyde faculty. A janus mask is the one Mozart's father and Salieri wear in the Milos Forman movie of Peter Shaeffer's *Amadeus*. But the SPD-SED paper is not janus-headed; rather, it is truly **ambivalent**. This often, and often carelessly, used word denotes some feature that is both good and bad **at the same time**, i.e., one single thing that has both negative and positive effects. Ambivalent does not mean having a good and a bad side; it means being being good and bad through the same feature. Wolfgang Hilligen, in *Gesellschaft und Staat*, uses "progress" and "growth" as political examples of ambivalent phenomena. Professor Wolfgang Drechsler stated that "there is a mask in the Suebian carnival that smiles with one half of the face and is angry with the other - that, rather than the *Amadeus* one, symbolizes the impact of the SPD-SED paper." (Interview with Wolfgang Drechsler, Marburg, 10 February 1995).

individuals, negotiations, proposals, and agreements carried out between the parties while the SPD was in opposition.

## Overview of Chapters

Yet, before any such analysis can be carried out, it will be vital to examine the circumstances prior to the SPD's fall from government in 1982. The first chapter will survey the post-war SPD and also their policy of *Ostpolitik* under Willy Brandt. Moreover, the policies of the first post-war leader of the SPD, Kurt Schumacher, will be addressed in order to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Schumacher and Brandt.

The erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was viewed by the SPD as an indication of the limitations of Adenauer's policy of strength and the reality that East Germany would not collapse by unremitting pressure by the Federal Republic and the West. Moreover it was a widely held view that such pressures would only make the GDR leadership even more defensive and repressive towards its own population. Thus it was the conviction of the SPD that it was time to rethink West German policy away from an exclusive emphasis on reunification, based on elimination of the GDR, to policies developed to improve conditions within the East German state. Thus the commitment of *Ostpolitik* was a concentration on improved relations with East Germany and improvement of living conditions and human rights in the GDR. This concentration led to Egon Bahr's concept of change through *rapprochement* (*Wandel durch Annäherung*). By accepting the *status quo*, Bahr had hoped that change would occur in East Germany and eventually this could lead to overcoming the *status quo*.<sup>18</sup> The application of *Ostpolitik* led by Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr was the establishment of treaties between the two Germanies and with these arrangements came the hope that inhabitants in both states would enjoy closer and better relations. Moreover, there was a sincere desire by the SPD to improve and bind relations between the two populations with the intent that such contacts would make the Wall more porous. For the leaders of the SPD, the basis (*Grundlage*) of *Ostpolitik* lay in the existence of the Wall.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*



Along with security views long-held by leaders of the SPD, like Bahr, another factor contributed to the formation of policies within the SPD in the 1980s. A new generation of leaders was now taking the lead in developing SPD policy. Prompted by security fears and the protest movement within Germany, young leaders established a "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. Typically, as with *Ostpolitik* in 1972, foreign policy issues united parties in Germany. This "second phase" was no different. Except for a minority of right-wing SPD members, the party used this new issue oriented policy to unite itself. The new posture in the 1980s centered around one key phrase "peace is not everything, but without peace everything is nothing!" (*Frieden ist nicht alles, aber ohne Frieden ist alles nichts!*).<sup>20</sup> This new perspective went beyond the reliance on the superpowers for improved relations between the East and West. This reliance produced alienation from within West Germany and the rejection of what Max Weber called "the disenchantment of our time," and its result, "the ice age of bureaucracy."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the idea of neutralism was also popular with the younger generation of the SPD in the face of American President Reagan's robust stance in East-West relations in the early 1980s. The "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* thus was driven by the fear of increasingly hostile relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and above all the fear of nuclear war. The second chapter will examine this new leadership as well as the numerous reasons and factors involved in the development of a policy centered around foreign and security policy.

The third chapter will address the architect of the SPD's new policies toward East Germany. At his famous Tützing speech, Egon Bahr argued for a policy of "*Wandel durch Annäherung*" (change through *rapprochement*) with the East. This new attitude, held also by Brandt, involved transcending the *status quo* by recognizing it, in the hope that accommodation and even contacts with the regime in East Germany would allow its leaders to pursue a less repressive policy towards its own population and ultimately move in the direction of unity. Because of his significant impact on SPD policy for over thirty years,<sup>22</sup> the third chapter will examine the development of Egon Bahr's beliefs through his association with the

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.; see also Egon Bahr, *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland*, 1991, pp. 127-138 *passim*.

<sup>21</sup>William E. Griffith, "The Security Policies of the Social Democrats and the Greens in the Federal Republic of Germany," in Griffith et al., *Security Perspectives of the West German Left*, 1989, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup>Egon Bahr is indeed proud of his influence in the SPD over three decades which he made clear to the author; interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

international commission under the leadership of Olof Palme in the early 1980s. Furthermore, in accordance with the recommendations of the Palme Commission, the SPD adopted many of the security positions associated with it. The concept of "common security" (*Gemeinsame Sicherheit*) was the fundamental notion to come out of the Palme Commission. Developed by Egon Bahr, this new security concept was not to be a component of deterrence, but a replacement for it. Furthermore, this concept was adopted by the SPD and supported vigorously throughout the 1980s. Its significance today is related to the debate regarding the fall of the Eastern Bloc. It is argued that "common security" was adopted by Gorbachev and influenced the openness of the Soviet leader and other leaders in the East in the late 1980s. Moreover, it is the catalyst for justification by the SPD and of its position in 1989 and 1990.

Of essence to this study, is the fact that Egon Bahr and the Palme Commission proposed the formation of chemical- and nuclear-free zones in Europe. This was adopted within the leadership of the SPD while in opposition and taken a step further with negotiations with the SED. The fourth chapter will detail the SPD's so-called *Nebenaußenpolitik* (shadow foreign policy) through a short history of SPD-East German contacts as well as a discussion of the specifics of the three all-important agreements between the SPD and SED from 1983 to 1987 (denoted in this work as the "Common Dialogue"). Acting "in the spirit of the Basic Treaty" the two parties produced "The Framework for an Agreement on the Formation of a Chemical-Weapons-Free Zone in Central Europe," "Principles for a Nuclear-Free Corridor in Central Europe," and "The Dispute of Ideologies and Common Security." These three agreements sparked off intense debates within Germany regarding the political as well as legal validity of such contacts. This chapter will detail the agreements, explain their similarities and differences, and examine supportive and negative positions in relation to the contacts. Central to this thesis is the linkage of these agreements to a wider context, a context represented by the party's positions prior to and following reunification. It is the author's contention that the exchange between the SPD and SED was a progression, albeit somewhat perverted, from Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, and that the ideology behind the contacts produced the ambivalence of the party in developing a coherent policy to deal with the sudden collapse of the GDR and German reunification.



The fifth chapter will concentrate on the SPD's 1992 five year review of the last and most important of the three agreements with the SED. The SPD has spent much of its scholarly effort in addressing the impact (justification) of the "Ideology/Common Paper" within the context of the fall of the GDR. Surprisingly, no substantive material on the "Common Paper - Five Years After" can be found in English. Thus, it is the goal of this thesis to bring the "dialogue about the dialogue" to an English-speaking audience. This chapter will examine the impact of the "Common Paper" of 1987 on change within the GDR. The contention by the supporters of the contacts is that the notion behind the paper influenced and facilitated internal SED debate regarding its own existence, thus allowing reform to transpire.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, opponents of the SPD-SED contacts contend that the paper had no effect and was a futile attempt by the SPD leadership because it relied on "reform from above."<sup>24</sup> Yet, before the debate on these questions can be addressed, the factors and circumstances which contributed to change within the former GDR must be covered. In chapter five, the upheavals in the GDR prior to its collapse will be examined. Thus the emphasis in this chapter rests with the debate about "reform." The background for addressing these positions will revolve around a 1992 reunited Social Democratic document entitled "In Spite of Everything - Helpful: The Dispute Paper from the SPD and SED; Five Years Later; A Declaration of the Basic Values Commission." Specifically, issues of West German accommodation with the East, human rights, the influence of Gorbachev, opposition movements, the two-state approach, internal SED struggle, and GDR repression, will be explored in relation to the collapse of the GDR in 1989-1990. In order to preview the relationship of the "Common Paper" with reunification, one need only observe Peter Weilemann's review of Kohl's ten point plan, in which the SPD receives mention only in the context of their "chumminess with the SED ... [and their] ill-fated SPD-SED 'polemic paper.'"<sup>25</sup>

The final chapter will examine the continuing debate within Germany regarding the consequences of SPD involvement with the SED in the 1980s. Unlike the SPD document of 1992 which was an attempt to justify the relationship and specifically

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<sup>23</sup>Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Stephan Hilsberg, Potsdam, 18 February 1995.

<sup>25</sup>Peter R. Weilemann, "The German Contribution Toward Overcoming the Division of Europe - Chancellor Helmut Kohl's 10 Points," offprint from *Außenpolitik*, no.1, vol. 41, 1990, p. 23.

the "Common Paper" of 1987, the final chapter will address the impact of the entire "Common Dialogue" in relation to the reunification issue. Moreover, the debate is no longer drawn between party lines; opposition leaders in the former GDR are now active within the SPD and have expressed critical assertions regarding the policies of the party throughout the 1980s. The "Common Paper" can be seen as a microcosm of Social Democratic policy in relation to the collapse of East Germany and German reunification. Specifically, the chapter will examine the debate amongst political scientists regarding the SPD contacts with the SED and its impact on the fall of East Germany. The debate is characterized by two distinct and opposing viewpoints. On one hand, defenders of the SPD-SED relations argue that the debate encouraged reform in East Germany and facilitated a peaceful incorporation of the eastern *Länder* to the West; yet, critics maintain the contacts had the opposite effect. Critics charge that the SPD contacts with the ruling SED leadership hindered reform within East Germany because it stabilized not simply the SED command structure, but also stabilized and legitimized the socialist state. In the final chapter, analysis of this debate along with an analysis of the SPD's position immediately before and after the fall of the Wall will be examined. It will be the conclusive goal of this thesis to place the policies of the SPD into proper perspective. As a result, the policies of the Social Democrats will be characterized as ambivalent: combining both beneficial as well as inhibiting factors towards the formation of a Reunified Germany.

## **Approaches**

The most popular "approach to the study of parties and foreign policy in West Germany has been to see the main determinant of party policy being whether it is performing a government or opposition role."<sup>26</sup> This method draws a distinction between oppositions which deal with domestic opinions, and governments which also respond to an international environment and orientate themselves towards capabilities.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 232.

<sup>27</sup>For this method, see Joseph Frankel, *National Interest*, 1970, pp. 31-33; noted in op. cit., p. 232.

According to Paterson, the most interesting and useful discussion of the role of the opposition in foreign policy-making is a short essay by Sheldon Appleton.<sup>28</sup> Appleton argues by employing a Downsian model in which the purpose of the rational party leader is simply to maximize votes for the next election. "Such a model," Paterson explains, "would lead us to expect that parties would not adopt the policies of their opponents but would take positions that converge near the median voter opinion on the issue question."<sup>29</sup> Deviating slightly from Downs's hypothesis, Appleton argues that in order for policy-makers to implement valued domestic and foreign policy goals, they have to create and maintain the electoral and legislative support necessary to remain in office. Thus, acting rationally, would suggest that in order to achieve electoral and/or legislative support, parties would have to trade off some policy goals.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, as with the SPD in the late 1980s, this approach may also explain the concentration on relations with the East, as it was perceived as enjoying public support.

Yet, this method would also assume that governments were also more willing to move towards the opposition's views if it was popular. In Germany, however, it is the exception for governments to deviate or move towards the policy of their opposition. Indeed the SPD did not. There are three reasons why this model is ineffective when applied to West Germany. Parliamentary leaders are more dependent than a popularly elected executive on the support of their own party members and thus less free to depart from party opinion; the influence of the *Länder* in the law-making process in the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council); and there is a greater saliency of foreign policy as an issue in West Germany, especially when foreign policy is in the form of inter-German relations.

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<sup>28</sup>Sheldon Appleton, "The Role of the Opposition in Foreign Policy Making," in R. L. Merritt (ed.), *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 1975, pp. 55-59.

<sup>29</sup>William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 233.

<sup>30</sup>William E. Paterson related the SPD's policy formation on European integration to the typology of modes of opposition developed by Otto Kirchheimer. In his doctoral thesis, William E. Paterson explained why Schumacher's concept of "loyal opposition" concentrated on foreign policy and why, given the bipolar international environment and penetrated domestic environment, it could not survive. Furthermore, Paterson analyzed the international pressures which made the party adopt a "principled opposition" to the EDC and attempts to explain why the party finally adopted the most minimal conception of opposition in relation to European integration; see op. cit.; and for Kirchheimer typology see Otto Kirchheimer, "The Waning of Opposition in Parliamentary Regimes," *Social Research*, 1957, p. 68; noted in op. cit., p. 233.



This thesis deals with institutions, and at its center, with texts - very "loaded" items with which to deal would, just a few years ago, have required ample justification. In 1995, fortunately, it is possible, especially in an area such as Political Science, to accept the warnings of Deconstructionism and other theories against the naive approach to a text or an institution, (*ohne das Kind mit dem Bade auszuschütten*).<sup>31</sup> This study is therefore based on the classical assumptions that institutions do matter and that they are "real," that "oral history" is possible, and that a discernible meaning can be gathered from a certain text. This means that the author may talk about "the SPD"; that an interview with Egon Bahr about *Ostpolitik* may aid the author's understanding about it; and that the SPD-SED paper is an important document which the author may attempt to analyze. In order to understand (i.e., the German concept of *Verstehen*)<sup>32</sup> and then to analyze what was happening, both steps are necessary.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, in order to get anywhere at all, one must attempt to reconstruct the context of a text, person, or event, such as Quentin Skinner has done when dealing with Machiavelli or Hobbes.<sup>34</sup> For instance, when dealing with the SPD-SED paper, one must take into account, as Wolfgang Drechsler has put it, that "one must be aware of the contexts and the different levels of discourse. One can only lie within a given discourse; if everyone is supposed to know what one really

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<sup>31</sup>This has been very successfully demonstrated, i.e., by Dmitri Shalin; see his "Modernity, Postmodernism, and Pragmatist Inquiry: An Introduction," *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 16, no. 4. 1993, pp. 303-332.

<sup>32</sup>The hermeneutical principle of *Verstehen* is today most closely associated with Hans-Georg Gadamer and especially with his *magnum opus*, *Wahrheit und Methode*. (Now in *Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 1-2: *Hermeneutik I = Wahrheit und Methode* and *II = Addenda*, Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1985.) The realization of the necessity of the concept of *Verstehen* in the social sciences, however, is much older and comes from several theoretical backgrounds. A good non-Weberian example is Werner Sombart, "Das Verstehen" (1928), in *Noo-Soziologie*, Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1956, pp. 75-93.

<sup>33</sup>"The reason for the necessity of the concept of *Verstehen* in the social sciences (whether this is understood hermeneutically or not), is that one needs to understand a text, person, an action, a group before one can set out to criticize him, her, it, or them, because it is methodologically important to follow the respective turn of mind. If one fails to do so, any criticism, however important or justified, will be meaningless. Therefore, if *Verstehen* is only seen as a first step, it does not necessarily entail a conservative element at all, even if its original protagonists mostly belong in this camp. Weberian objectivity in the social sciences might be methodologically impossible, but we actually come closer to this goal by employing *Verstehen* first and criticism later." Interview with Wolfgang Drechsler, Marburg, 10 February 1995.

<sup>34</sup>See Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli*, Oxford: OUP, 1981; Quentin Skinner, "The Study of Rhetoric as an Approach to Cultural History: The Case of Hobbes," in *Main Trends in Cultural History: Ten Essays*, W. Melching and W. Velema, eds., offprint.

means, one does not lie. Hermann Axen saying he believes in Freedom and Liberty for all is like an American supermarket cashier saying 'Have a nice day!' - he doesn't mean it, but everyone knows, or should know, that he doesn't."<sup>35</sup>

In short, the author hopes the study that has emerged is "post-post-modern" and thus, actually classical, without constituting a fall-back into earlier positivistic-scientistic frameworks. He has attempted to be as careful in his dealings with texts, people, and institutions as possible, but the author does indeed believe that communication with just a marginal loss of meaning is possible.

## Literature

In his well-known article "Political Parties in Western Democracies," Anthony King maintains that there are two concepts which have been influential in the study of political parties.<sup>36</sup> The first concept classifies the party under examination as a group, association or a community. Thus with this approach, examination of the party's internal structure is performed. The second concept which is labeled the behavioral view, observes the party as a set of patterned actions of the participants in the party systems. In agreement with Eldersveld, "the party is a social group, a system of meaningful and patterned activity within the larger society."<sup>37</sup> Paterson notes that the advantage of the first concept is that it enables fairly clear boundaries to be drawn, "individuals are either in or out." Yet the second concept allows the scholar to examine the interaction of parties within the party system. "The first approach has been more successful than the second, but neither have been productive of any outstanding work on party and foreign policy."<sup>38</sup>

Paterson asserts that the reason for the failure of the comparative politics literature to deal adequately with political parties and foreign policy is connected with their development in nineteenth century Europe; political parties and the party system "grew up" around the four great cleavages, i.e., urban/rural, religion, language, and

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<sup>35</sup>Interview with Wolfgang Drechsler, Marburg, 10 February 1995.

<sup>36</sup>Anthony King, "Political Parties in Western Democracies," *Polity*, 1969, pp. 112-141.

<sup>37</sup>Noted in William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 229.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 232.

class. He asserts that foreign policy in effect has been absorbed into a set of pre-existing cleavages. Yet, he also notes that foreign policy in newer states in Europe into which category Germany would no doubt fall, has played a much greater role in structuring the party system.<sup>39</sup>

The predominant literature involved in the study of the foreign policy of the SPD in the post-war years can be categorized into four distinct groupings. Mostly, literature is based on the status of the Social Democrats, i.e., whether they were in government or not. Thus the first grouping represents (foreign policy) literature during the SPD's period of government during the late 1960s and 1970s. This literature is the most plentiful and concentrates on its executive functions and, most importantly, Willy Brandt. Specific examinations within this context have concentrated on treaties and party programs when related to foreign policy.

Understandably, the second category represents the policies of the SPD in opposition. This is in the form of foreign policy and especially intra-German (1945-1949) policy under the leadership of Kurt Schumacher and SPD inter-German policy from 1983 to today. Examinations in this context have centered around the party's foreign policy ideology, for example, issues of neutralism and generational attitudes. Moreover, party programs have tended to designate the posture of the SPD because of the lack of direct access to foreign policy decision-making while in opposition.

However, more well-defined literature can be found in relation to the SPD and foreign policy. The third grouping examines the policy of *Ostpolitik* and the policies of relations with the Soviet Union, East Germany and other East European states. (Relations with the West is best categorized within the government role of the party). This literature has tended to concentrate on security issues in relation to *Ostpolitik* and the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. Yet, for the purposes of this thesis, this grouping best fit the context of this thesis, i.e., the relations between the SPD and SED. Interestingly, the literature in this grouping is often related to ideological convictions of specific individuals within the SPD. This is best explained with the understanding that negotiations with the SED

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 229.



implicitly represented a wider implication, for example, on the issue of reunification and the status of the GDR.

Finally, the fourth grouping of literature represents the relationship of the SPD and other political parties, either in West Germany or other socialist (social democratic) parties in Europe. Within this final category lies the literature of the SPD and Europe. This is justifiable because the SPD has generally developed its stance on Europe in association with other socialist parties because of its strong devotion to the principles of a "social" Europe. Furthermore, any hope for political gains in Europe rests within its strength in the European Parliament in which the socialist parties have the largest ratio of representatives.<sup>40</sup>

The general literature involved in this study is composed of archival documents from the SPD and SED, articles by Social Democrats and East German leaders, books reviewing SPD inter-German policy, and articles regarding the SPD-SED contacts. Fundamental to any study of a German political party are primary sources from the particular party as well as the party's publications through its academic sources: *Deutschland Archiv* journal, and the *Neue Gesellschaft* journal, both associated with the SPD and *Neues Deutschland* associated with the SED. During the years from 1983 until 1988 many significant publications within the aforementioned journals were devoted to the SPD-SED relationship. Moreover, the SPD's academic foundation, the *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, has also contributed much information to the analysis of the inter-German relationship.

The first chapter which highlights the *Ostpolitik* of Brandt was relatively straightforward to research and the literature behind the policies of Brandt and Bahr in the 1960s and 1970s was plentiful. Specifically, the SPD maintained power in the Federal Republic either as a coalition partner with the Christian Democrats (the SPD was responsible for the inter-German relationship within the coalition), or as leading coalition party in a coalition with the Free Democrats. Thus, literature relating to the SPD was in great supply in German as well as foreign sources. Notably a few sources, which were found to be most helpful, were Gebhard Schweigler's article in Kippendorf and Rittberger's *The Foreign*

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<sup>40</sup>See Richard R. Moeller, "The Social Democratic Party," in John Gaffney, *Political Parties and the European Union*, forthcoming.

*Policy of West Germany* (1980); Peter Merkl's *West German Foreign Policy: Dilemmas and Directions* (1982); Klaus Harpprecht's *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait* (1972); for their expansive coverage of *Ostpolitik*, Smith, Paterson, Merkl and Padgett's *Developments in German Politics* (1992); and Paterson's article in Padgett's *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship* (1994).

Literature for the second chapter proved to be a bit more arduous. Most of the literature on the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was combined with other sources like the Greens or the CDU's foreign policy. Thus, the bulk of research was conducted through German and English sources in the context of wider studies. Yet, within the topic of the SPD's "second phase," other subordinate issues were vital to research. Among these were the West German Protest movement, specific security positions taken by prominent members of the SPD, and neutralism. Of notable assistance were Jeffrey Herf's article "War Peace and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement" in *International Security* (1986); Diane Rosolowsky's *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens* (1987), and Stephen Padgett's article "The West-German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-1986" in *West European Politics* (1987). Moreover, specific information on official policy during the 1980s was found in the SPD's *Jahrbücher* (Year Books) from 1982 until 1987.

The third chapter is devoted to the policies of Egon Bahr and the Palme Commission; thus, much of the information for this chapter was from literature on Egon Bahr and his inter-German concepts, "common security," and the Palme Commission. For example, Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz's *Gemeinsame Sicherheit: Idee und Konzept* (1986) was of vital importance. Information on the recommendations made by the Palme Commission for chemical and nuclear-free zones were found in the actual report entitled *Palme Commission Report, Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament* (1982). Furthermore, because the formation of SPD policy is inter-connected with the tenets of Bahr's "common security" and posture towards East Germany, literature written by him is important in explaining and understanding the SPD policy. Thus his books *Zum europäischen Frieden: Eine Antwort auf Gorbatschow* (1988) and *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland: Vom Wandel durch Annäherung zur Europäischen*

*Sicherheitsgemeinschaft* (1991) were vital for comprehending his beliefs. Moreover, Karsten Schröder's book *Egon Bahr* (1988) explained in a biographical way the history of policy formation throughout Bahr's life.

The bulk of literature reviewed for this thesis was on the SPD-SED contacts during 1983 until 1987. Specific details on the three agreements by the SPD and SED were found in German sources. For example, Karsten Voigt, as a post-war generation member of the SPD, published numerous articles in many of the SPD's academic journals which were of central importance to literature on the SPD-SED relationship and agreements. Moreover, Klaus Moseleit's *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD 1983-1989* (1991); James McAdams's and Jonathan Dean's chapters in Larrabee's *The Two German States and European Security* (1989); and William Griffith's *Security Perspectives of the German Left: The SPD and the Greens in Opposition* (1988) were quite useful for background information on the contacts. The most vital sources for the SPD-SED contacts were found in journals such as *Politik*, *Deutschland Archiv*, *Neues Deutschland*, and *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, along with SPD original documents and reprints of SPD papers.

Opposition and support in the form of inter-party and intra-party literature could primarily be found in German newspaper and journal articles in 1987. For example, vital supportive literature was Thomas Meyer's (SPD) "Ein neuer Rahmen für den Ost-West-Dialog" in *Die Neue Gesellschaft*; Erhard Eppler's (SPD) "Ärger mit allzu simplen Begriffen" in *Vorwärts*; Iring Fetscher's (SPD) "Für realistische Formen des Wettbewerbs der Ideen" in *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*; and Otto Reinhold's (SED) "Ein Dokument von historischem Rang" in *Einheit*. Vital opposing literature was Gerd Bucerius's (CDU) "Aus der Vergangenheit nichts gelernt?" in *Die Zeit*; Gesine Schwan (SPD) "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen" in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; and in 1986 a paper by the CDU entitled "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes" in *Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle*.

Literature for the fifth and sixth chapters was similar in one major respect; both sets of literature examined the SPD-SED relationship of the 1980s from a



retrospective viewpoint. The fifth chapter centered around one key document: *Trotz allem -hilfreich: Das Streitkultur-Papier von SPD und SED; Fünf Jahre danach; Eine Stellungnahme der Grundwertekommission* (The "Five Years Later" Paper) (1992). Literature for this chapter relates to the assertions by the SPD of reform within the SED. For example, literature supporting the SPD view was Manfred Uschner's book *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie* (1991) and Ann Phillips *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue* (1989). On the other hand, contentions that no change occurred, or if change did occur it was the result of external, non-German, influences were made by articles in the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service of Eastern Europe* and Jeffrey Gedmin's articles in *World Affairs* of Spring 1990.

The final chapter centered around a conference by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) entitled *Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989* of September 1993 and a report of the conference documented by the head of the FES's Historical Research Center, Dieter Dowe. The significance of the conference is the internal SPD debate and the questions raised from within the party regarding the SPD-SED contacts. For historical and systematic examination of the SPD's policies surrounding reunification and the attitude of the SPD in the East following the fall of the wall, Peter Merkl's book *German Unification in European Context* and Stephen Silvia's article "Left Behind: The Social Democratic Party in Eastern Germany" in *West European Affairs* were beneficial. Moreover, an interesting paper written by Thomas Meyer and Susanne Miller of the SPD's *Grundwertekommission* critical of the SED in 1989, although never published, was helpful in examining the ideological evolution of political standpoints of certain party members in light of the repressive posture taken by the GDR government prior to the fall of the GDR.

Unquestionably, the literature representing the SPD-SED relationship is dominated by Timothy Garton Ash's book *In Europe's Name* (1993). Despite the fact that this thesis tackles similar questions to those asked by Ash, it differs in one significant way: the foundations of analysis are different. Ash's work, based on a critical analysis of *Ostpolitik*, was based on a preconceived belief, i.e., that the SPD's eastern policy was fatally flawed because it "relativised" western

values.<sup>41</sup> Thus it can be argued that this preconceived notion of *Ostpolitik* hindered an analytical understanding of the motives of the Social Democrats because it lumped the entire notion of *Ostpolitik* in with the SPD's reliance on reform in the GDR "from above."<sup>42</sup> However, this is not to say that Ash's work is not entirely correct; on the contrary, many of his findings coincide with the conclusions of this thesis. Yet, the overall conclusion is different. As mentioned earlier, it is the goal of this thesis to explain the contacts between the SPD and SED for what they really were: an ambivalent and misguided attempt to ease the tensions between the East and the West and bring about a change to the *status quo*. This thesis and Ash's book are both critical of the SPD's contacts with the East German government; however, the way in which the conclusions are reached are indeed distinguishable.

## Research

The research involved in this thesis was conducted from March 1993 until February 1995. The initial research was conducted at the University of Edinburgh's *Europa Institute* which has a substantial collection of literature in the field of German politics although the institute is primarily centered around the study of European Union Affairs. The *Europa Institute* can be said to have a German concentration from the influence of its former Director and the author's *Doktorvater*, William E. Paterson.

The other principal location where research was conducted was at the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik* (German Society for Foreign Relations) in Bonn. It is similar to, and also has connections with, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London and the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. Its extensive library was useful in providing an extensive collection of works relating to the topic of this thesis which could not be acquired

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<sup>41</sup>Or as Ash himself puts it: "comprehensive relativisation of traditional Western values in the name of the supreme requirement of peace;" Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 318.

<sup>42</sup>The basic mistake of the SPD, according to Ash, was "the belief that political change in Eastern Europe could only come from those who already held power, through reform from above - and the concomitant neglect of the individuals, groups and movements working for change from below." After the experience of the 1970s, this "should no longer have been credible." op. cit., p. 340.

in Britain. The library of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the *Bundestag* in Bonn were also helpful for this very reason.

By far the most illuminating research was conducted through primary sources of the SPD and SED in Germany. The first center consulted was the *Archiv der sozialen Demokratie* (Social Democratic Archives) in Bonn where the collection of Egon Bahr papers are held. For general foreign policy sources of the SPD, especially during the Grand Coalition (1966-1969) and the SPD-FDP Coalition under Willy Brandt (1969-1972) research was conducted at the *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts* (Political Archives of the [Federal Republic's] Foreign Office). The most stimulating primary sources were found in East Berlin at the *Zentrales Parteiarchiv* (Central Committee [of the SED] Archiv) center at the *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR* (Foundation Archive of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR). Within these archives were former secret documents amongst SED leaders relating to the SPD, the SPD-SED relationship, and personal contacts between Egon Bahr and his counterpart in the SED, Hermann Axen.

"Oral history" is a key part of this thesis. Because of the personal and ideological motivations of the individuals involved, it was necessary to conduct interviews with individuals who were able to reveal details which could not be found in the literature or primary sources relating to the SPD-SED contacts. The findings of these interviews have been worked in throughout the chapters; yet, for purposes of a concise overview, the persons interviewed are listed here according to name, date, place, and relevance.

1. Thomas Meyer, 9 February 1995, Bonn, Principal author of the 1987 "Common Paper." Chairman of the SPD's *Grundwertekommission*.
2. Wolfgang Drechsler, 10 February 1995, Marburg, Professor of Public Administration and Political Science at the University of Tartu, Estonia.
3. Hanno H. Drechsler, 12 February 1995, Marburg, Former Lord Mayor of Marburg and member of the SPD.



4. Ann Phillips, 15 February 1995, Bonn, Author of *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue* (1989).

5. Karsten D. Voigt, 15 February 1995, Bonn, Principal author along with Egon Bahr in the Chemical-Weapons-Free Zone and Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone proposals in 1984 and 1985 respectively. Chairman of the SPD Young Socialists 1972-73; 1971-73 Vice-President of the International Union of Socialist Youth; Member of the SPD's *Parteivorstand* since 1984; and Member of the *Bundestag* since 1972.

6. Dieter Dowe, 16 February 1995, Bonn, Head of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Historical Research Center; organizer of a conference in September 1993 examining the SPD's *Ost* and *Deutschlandpolitik* in the 1980s.

7. Egon Bahr, 17 February 1995, Bonn, Architect of *Wandel durch Annäherung* (Change through *Rapprochement*) and the concept of "common security"; Chief representative of the SPD in the contacts with the SED in the 1980s; State Secretary of the Chancellor's Office in 1969; Member of the *Bundestag* from 1972 until 1990; Federal Minister for Special Tasks at the Office of the Chancellor from 1972 until 1974; Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation from 1974 until 1976; and *Bundesgeschäftsführer* (Federal Party Manager) of the SPD from 1976 until 1981.

8. Stephan Hilsberg, 18 February 1995, Potsdam, Opposition leader in the former GDR; Manager of the Social Democratic Party in the GDR in March 1990; Member of the East German *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber) from March to October 1990; Member of the *Bundestag* since December 1990.

9. Burkhard Koch, 20 February 1995, Berlin, Foreign Affairs Adviser to the interim government of Lothar de Maizière; associated with the East German Christian Democratic Party from April to October 1990.

10. Ivar Tallo, 23 February 1995, Frankfurt, Observer of the reform process from within the Soviet Union in the late 1980s; Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Republic of Estonia 1994.

## Significance

The significance of the "Common Dialogue" between the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist Unity Party is simple: it represents a wider context. It directly affected the stance of the SPD in relation to reunification. Moreover, in Germany today, the two issues (SPD-SED contacts and reunification) are linked together when examining the SPD. For example, in the well known dictionary of politics entitled *Gesellschaft und Staat*, the eighth edition explains the SPD position on reunification in 1989-90 as follows:

As meritorious as the SPD under *Willy Brandt* had rendered itself with the initiation of a new *Ostpolitik* and *détente*, little did it pay attention to the fact that in consequence of this dialectic policy of "*rapprochement* and delineation," for some the ideological delineation from Communism did not remain obvious. The SPD did not realize that negotiations between the two German governments were necessary and legitimate, however not negotiations between SPD and SED. Already in 1986, both parties agreed on common "principles" for an atomic-weapons-free zone in Central Europe. In 1987, the SPD's Basic Values Commission and the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the SED worked out a common declaration on the subject of "Ideological and Common Security," which attested to both societal systems [having] the ability to reform.

The SPD neither recognized the early indicators of the revolutionary uprising in the GDR, nor did it realize that the call for freedom would soon be identical with the call for unity and that therefore the orientation toward a reformed independent GDR would [be] completely passed up by the will of the overwhelming majority of the GDR's population. It was only with serious reservations that the party and its new candidate for Chancellor, *Oskar Lafontaine*, went along with the unification process, which

was supported by Willy Brandt with the words: "Now grows together what belongs together."<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, the issue regarding the fall of Communism is inextricably bound up within the context of SPD policy. "Common security," Egon Bahr's formula adopted in 1982 by the Palme Commission, and the basis for the SPD-SED contacts, it is argued, contributed to Gorbachev's "new thinking." Brandt argued in 1989 that a straight line could be drawn between Palme to Gorbachev. However, the other side of the argument is that it was Reagan's policy of a reinvigorated Cold War and rearmament that compelled the decisive turn in Soviet foreign policy. Whether one agrees with the former or later explanation for the dramatic events in 1989 and 1990, there is considerable justification for an in-depth examination of the SPD-SED contacts in the 1980s.

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<sup>43</sup>Hanno Drechsler, et al., *Gesellschaft und Staat: Lexikon der Politik*, Munich: Franz Vahlen, 1992.

### *The Ostpolitik of Brandt*

One of the central orientations of West German foreign policy was a product of defeat and occupation. The developing tension between the Western allies and the Soviet Union led to the breakdown of Four Power Control in Germany and a commitment by the United States' government to stabilize the Western occupied zones and create a West German state. In origin, the West German state, as William Paterson explains, was a foreign policy in search of a state rather than a state in search of a foreign policy. The creation of the new state on the basis of the division of the unified state that had existed since 1871 carried with it the inevitable inference that the foreign policy of the new state would have a central commitment to the reunification of Germany and this commitment was incorporated into the Federal Republic's Basic Law in 1949.<sup>1</sup>

The groundwork for the eventual contacts between the SPD and SED were developed under the leadership of Willy Brandt from 1966 until 1974 and his new policy of *Ostpolitik*. Indeed, *Ostpolitik* created the catalyst for future contacts with the East; however, the initial impetus of *Ostpolitik* lay in managing the *fait accompli* of the time, i.e., the existence of the Berlin Wall and a divided Germany.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the concerns which motivated *Ostpolitik* were not based on security issues, which would later fashion the SPD-SED relationship of the 1980s; rather, *Ostpolitik* was concerned with living conditions, both in West and East Germany. Moreover, this new policy differed from that of the SPD's first post-war leader Kurt Schumacher and the government policy developed by Konrad Adenauer in that it accepted the *status quo* in an attempt to overcome it. Brandt believed that if the relations with the Soviet Union and the GDR would become more relaxed (*Entspannung*) then this would lead to a better chance of keeping the German people together.

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds.), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 139-140; According to the (pre-unification) Basic Law Preamble "the German people have acted on behalf of those Germans to whom participation was denied. The entire German people are called upon to achieve in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany." See See Roger Tilford, "Introduction," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.



*Ostpolitik* is significant in that it integrated the SPD<sup>3</sup> under Brandt's belief that change could and should take place within the framework of the existing order. This was seen as a relief to the hostile relationship that had occurred up to this time. What was created, as Peter Pulzer stated, was "a revived political optimism: a recovery of the belief that progress was possible, that happiness could be enhanced and evil diminished by rational human beings acting in concert."<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Pulzer asserted that Brandt's political success rested in the field of foreign policy, "with the revision and stabilization of relations of Eastern Europe under the general cover of *détente* and known as *Ostpolitik*."<sup>5</sup>

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate that, beginning in the late 1960s and up to the late 1970s, a specific ideology formed within the Social Democratic Party. Brandt's influence, along with prominent members of the SPD like Egon Bahr, developed this ideology representing a new view of European policy contrary to that of Adenauer's *Westpolitik*<sup>6</sup> with a concentration on foreign policy which was directed towards the East. Brandt's influence began in the Grand Coalition from 1966 until 1969 in which he was chiefly responsible for foreign affairs as Foreign Minister and from 1969 until 1974 when he was Chancellor with a coalition with the FDP (Free Democratic Party).

Yet, before examining the policy of *Ostpolitik*, it would be worthwhile to briefly examine the policies of the SPD's first post-war leader Kurt Schumacher. Indeed the policies of Brandt in the late 1960s contrasted with those of Schumacher in many ways. Although both leaders strived to overcome the international situation

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<sup>3</sup>Gordon Smith, "The 'New' Party System," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>Peter Pulzer, "Political Ideology," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 310.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>During his fifteen-year leadership of West German politics, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer gave clear priority to integration of the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany into NATO and Western Europe over efforts to reunify Germany, an issue which he considered mainly the responsibility of the Western allies and the USSR. Under Adenauer, West German policy posited the prior dissolution of the German Democratic Republic and the reunification of Germany as a precondition for East-West arms control agreements. As the dominant Western power of the postwar period, the United States was in basic agreement with Adenauer's fundamental policy and supported his policies directed towards the West. See Geoffrey Pridham, "The *Ostpolitik* and the Opposition in West Germany," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, Saxon House, Farnborough, 1975, p. 45.

of their time, Schumacher saw German reunification as his most important goal. Yet, both leaders recognized that fulfillment of their respective aspirations lay in Moscow.

Post-war SPD policy was defined by the emergence of Kurt Schumacher at the Kloster Wennigsen conference of October 1945 as the first post-war leader of the party. In his biography of Schumacher, Lewis Edinger states that, there was "no doubt in the minds of Schumacher's closest associates that he made every major decision affecting the national policy of his party between 1946 and 1952."<sup>7</sup> Schumacher had a particularly strong national consciousness. He was able to exercise a respectable amount of moral authority due to the courage with which he had opposed the Nazis and his imprisonment in the Dachau concentration camp. His political audience recognized that his own sense of patriotism had not been tainted by Nazism and that he bore no responsibility for its actions. Rather, Schumacher saw re-establishing German Unity and parliamentary values as his most important post-war task. His belief in German reunification was given a higher priority than any moves towards Western European integration.

Like Brandt, Schumacher's goals lay in connection with the Soviet Union. For Schumacher, in order to achieve a united Germany, the SPD needed Soviet support and cooperation. However, the Soviet Union was unwilling to accept the SPD's concept of democratic self-determination and the SPD was unwilling to compromise its freedom and independence. Moreover it is quite possible that the SPD could not really offer an alternative foreign policy, because even if the Soviets had been amenable to a democratic socialist Germany, it is unlikely that the western powers would have welcomed this.

There were also some other similarities between Schumacher and Brandt. Schumacher desired a European-based policy for Germany. However, his rejection of the Western-oriented policies of the CDU/CSU was based largely on its commitment to German unity. In order to achieve this, the SPD advocated a foreign policy that, in practice, would have been neutralist. His rejection of the policy of strength, after 1948, and of the western alliance politics of the Adenauer government, was also a rejection of the division of Europe into opposing blocs.

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<sup>7</sup>Lewis Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher*, 1965, pp. 112-117.

Schumacher's statements during this period reflected a traditional internationalist faith; he desired, most of all, German reunification with equal status in relation to other nations. In 1946, Schumacher stated:

Social Democrats cannot conceive of a new Germany as an isolated and nationalistic Germany. They can only envisage Germany as a component of Europe, but they wish this Germany to be not a pariah but an equal.<sup>8</sup>

For Schumacher, European integration was inextricably bound up with the German question. He stated, "There is no German question which is not at the same time also a European question." The official policy of the SPD contained a challenging objective, and one that would prove to be too idealistic. The April 1948 conference in Düsseldorf declared that the goal of the SPD remained "a united, democratic Germany in freedom and peace," and one which "in common with the social democrats of all countries strives for the league of free peoples in the United States of Europe."<sup>9</sup> Yet, Schumacher's goal of a united Germany in a united Europe became incompatible with the unfolding events in East-West relations.

Unfortunately, Schumacher's uncompromising militancy in pursuit of his goals obscured his arguments. He was criticized for his nationalistic position by both the opposition, which claimed the SPD would sell democracy to Moscow, and the occupation powers, which considered him obstructionist. Schumacher believed that allied policies would restore the capitalist-dominated social structure that had twice failed German democracy.

For Schumacher, nation-states were the natural consequence of democratic self-determination. Nationalism in the chauvinistic, expansionist mode contradicted the principles of democracy and self-determination. National unity would be the consequence of democratic self-determination. Schumacher never doubted that, given the chance, the Germans under Soviet control would choose Social

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<sup>8</sup>SPD paper, May 1979; taken from *Nach dem Zusammenbruch-Gedanken über Demokratie und Sozialismus*, Hamburg: Karl Strutz, 1946, p.46. Cited in Kevin Featherstone, *Socialist Parties and European Integration*, Manchester, 1988, p. 144.

<sup>9</sup>SPD paper, May 1979; taken from *Nach dem Zusammenbruch-Gedanken über Demokratie und Sozialismus*, Hamburg: Karl Strutz, 1946, p.46. Cited in Kevin Featherstone, *Socialist Parties and European Integration*, Manchester, 1988, p. 144.

Democracy.<sup>10</sup> Under Schumacher's leadership the SPD reestablished the philosophical bond between democracy and the concept of nationhood.

### Brandt's Leadership

Unlike Schumacher, Brandt rejected the idea of *Staatsnation* (nation defined by citizenship) and instead emphasized the notion of *Kulturnation* (nation defined by a common culture and heritage).<sup>11</sup> Unlike Schumacher, in other words, it was not the unification of people of a common culture and heritage within a state that was his concern; rather, it was the *Kulturnation* or a distinctive way of life which enables people to live together and to develop and maintain a sense of national and cultural uniqueness.<sup>12</sup> Historically, this feeling had not, as Brandt constantly emphasized, depended on living within the same frontiers. In other words, the new government, in the hope of preserving the German nation as a *Kulturnation*, refrained from stressing the pursuit of *Staatsnation*.<sup>13</sup> Gebhard Schweigler emphasized the importance of this in 1975: "The problem is not whether Germany exists as a state because in reality it doesn't, except in legal fiction, but whether the nation still exists because after all that is what Brandt sought to achieve."<sup>14</sup>

References to the *Staatsnation* were absent in both Brandt's 28 October 1969<sup>15</sup> government declaration and his 14 January 1970 State of the Nation speech.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>In 1986, the CDU would refer to the SPD's relationship with the SED and state, "this is the reality of Kurt Schumacher's party in the year 1986." See Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup>See William E. Paterson, "The *Ostpolitik* and Regime Stability in West Germany," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, Saxon House, Farnborough, 1975, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup>Gebhard Schweigler, *National Consciousness in Divided Germany*, 1975, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 146.

<sup>14</sup>Gebhard Schweigler in Krippendorf and Rittberger (eds) *The Foreign Policy of West Germany*, 1980, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup>For the purposes of a more concise review of *Ostpolitik* relating to future SPD-SED relations, this study begins, more or less, from Brandt's Chancellorship in 1969. As Geoffrey K. Roberts explains, "Kiesinger also tried to begin negotiations with East Germany on a number of concrete issues,...but these proposals were ignored by the East German authorities, who instead proposed negotiations over the 'normalization of relations.' This, to the East Germans, would have implied full diplomatic recognition,...and the fact [was] that his government could not consider recognition of the GDR as a foreign state, much as he wished for closer relations." See Geoffrey K. Roberts, "The *Ostpolitik* and Relations Between the Two Germanies," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 79-80.



However, this did not mean that the abandonment of the nation-state as a political entity for Germans would mean the abandonment of association between the German people.

In discarding earlier formulas for national reunification, the new *Ostpolitik* by no means abandoned the quest for reassociation between the two German states and their divergent societies, nor the hope for an ultimate erasure of German national division. On the contrary, Bonn's official vision under Brandt, postulated a process that began by preserving the substance of the nation and proceeded to a *rapprochement* of the two German states.<sup>17</sup>

### **Brandt's Objectives**

In the late 1960s, Brandt's objectives and those of the East German government were in conflict with one another. The GDR demanded full sovereign recognition of its status as a state. However, for Brandt to succeed in his objective of making the Federal Republic relevant to all Germans, he had to engineer a situation within which there would be increased association among Germans.

Both Adenauer's *Westpolitik* and Brandt's *Ostpolitik* existed within a network of alliances, and were sub-systems of a wider policy system, that of Superpower relations. The scope for meaningful unilateral initiatives by "medium-power" nation-states such as the FRG could no longer exist. National policies, such as Brandt's *Deutschlandpolitik*, were embedded in a wider international framework, and could not stand in opposition or contradiction to the basic tenets of such a framework. As Brandt stated:

Both German states are not only neighbors, but are parts of a nation with many other common characteristics. What is more natural than to take care of their practical problems as sensibly as possible? We are ready to do that. We are ready to participate in the creation of any agreements that might lead to mutually acceptable regulations in the fields of economics, science, transportation, postal service, culture, sports, information exchange, etc. In this way we would fulfill the need to have the interrelationship of the German states catch up to their relations with outside countries. This must be

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<sup>16</sup>Croan in Peter Merkl, (ed.), *West German Foreign Policy: Dilemmas and Directions*, 1982, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup>L. Whetten, *Germany, East and West: Conflict and Collaboration*. New York University Press: London, 1980, p. 29.

taken care of before we can establish close rapports as is appropriate for two state systems within one nation.<sup>18</sup>

The objective was to take "practical steps" to preserve the unity of the German nation across the inter-German political divide. This objective was to set into motion a process which would allow the German people to come together within an European Peace Order (EPO), i.e., a European order or system which would provide for federal co-operation in Europe and which would bind all European states closer together, thus eliminating or at least reducing antagonistic competition between European nation-states.<sup>19</sup>

What Brandt proposed was a complete break with the painful aspects of the German past. He did not urge his fellow Germans to deny that past policies and atrocities were carried out by Germans for and on behalf of Germany. Neither did he pretend that German cultural heritage was not related to the German past. Rather, Brandt was calling upon Germans to come to terms with the legacy of history.<sup>20</sup>

Brandt was also clear that when he spoke of the German nation he was not referring solely to the Federal Republic. Rather he was concerned with maintaining German national consciousness and a sense of national community among Germans of both states. Brandt rejected both German nationalism and the nation-state as conventionally understood. He did not espouse the doctrine of nationalism which asserts the right of a given nationality to form a state and seeks to promote a movement to attain it.<sup>21</sup> What Brandt was trying to achieve was the preservation of a feeling of national belonging among all Germans which would facilitate a re-association of people of German nationality in a politically restructured Europe in which the nation-state was dissolved or diluted. He stated:

Today we are carrying out a policy for ourselves as a half of Germany and with a glance at the whole. We suffer from a division that has been forced upon us by world politics but that must also be

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<sup>18</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, pp. 296-297.

<sup>19</sup>Above all, this notion was in strict contrast to Adenauer's West European commitment. For a review of this notion see William E. Paterson, "The *Ostpolitik* and Regime Stability in West Germany," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup>For this view see Willy Brandt, *A Peace Policy for Europe*, 1969, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>R. Macridis, *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, 1980, p. 269.

understood as a consequence of the Hitler War ... the center of gravity of our task lies in Europe.<sup>22</sup>

Brandt presented a strategy which bound *Deutschlandpolitik* with a number of other policy areas, the most important of which was Superpower *détente*. It could reasonably be assumed that as long as the Superpowers maintained their momentum towards *détente* and Brandt himself pursued policies which actively and positively supplemented such moves, he could be able, at the very least, to prevent the two populations from drifting further apart.

In this respect he was critical of the CDU/CSU's *Westpolitik* and their attitude towards (West) Berlin. Brandt viewed Berlin as a microcosm which not only reflected the problems of division, but provided a potential key to the solution of the division. For Brandt, the best way in which the Federal government could demonstrate the seriousness of its *Deutschlandpolitik* was to strengthen the links between West Berlin and the FRG in order to present West Berlin as a showcase of the Western world to the GDR population, which up until 1961 had relatively free access to West Berlin.<sup>23</sup> As far as he was concerned, Berlin was the physical, national and emotional center of Germany.<sup>24</sup>

Brandt continued to insist that the principal task of German foreign policy was to "prepare a European peace system and to help settle the unresolved German problem within this framework."<sup>25</sup> However, as mentioned earlier, he no longer spoke of resolving the division of Germany, but the necessity to "preserve Germany as a cultural nation."<sup>26</sup>

I am realistic enough to know that the national unity of the German people - the isolated realization of its right to self-determination - is not, today, on the agenda of practical politics. Only through the unfolding of a historic process will both portions of Germany be brought closer to each other and linked together; and that process

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<sup>22</sup>Willy Brandt, *A Peace Policy for Europe*, 1969, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup>Willy Brandt, *Was Können Wir für die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands tun?* Deutsche Polizei GMBH: Hamburg, 1955, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Willy Brandt in Social Democratic Party of Germany: *A Programme for Government*, Neue Vorwärts: Bonn, 1961, p. 3. For Brandt, the lack of commitment to West Berlin by successive Federal governments, mirrored their general sloth as regards to producing a practical as opposed to rhetorical *Deutschlandpolitik*.

<sup>25</sup>Willy Brandt, "German Peace Policy," *News from Germany*, November 1968.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

revolves around Europe. But one must desire this process, envisage it, and begin it. That process is in the German interest, but it is also just as much - I am deeply convinced of this - in the interest of the Soviet Union and in the interest of all our neighbors, to envisage a peace that is secure beyond all need for precautions; beyond any desire for disturbing changes. ...<sup>27</sup> In truth, we are forced to admit that there is little hope for an early, fundamental change in this divided status.<sup>28</sup>

The basic thrust of the new *Ostpolitik* was not only to offer, as the CDU government had done in 1966, a renunciation of force, but to buttress this by a recognition of realities, in effect a recognition of existing frontiers in Europe. For Brandt and the SPD, the CDU-led governments had pursued a policy of Western integration which had not achieved all that it had purported to. The SPD's opinion was:

Their promise that the policy of integration and forced armament might lead automatically to the unity of Germany has not been kept. As forecast by us, the aim of all-German policies, the reunification in peace and freedom, has unfortunately become more difficult and pushed away into the distance.<sup>29</sup>

The result of this particular form of *Westpolitik*, which was powerful in the immediate post-war period, when coupled with the policies of the SED, was to create a dynamic. This dynamic seemed to have resulted by the late 1960s in the endangerment of the very existence of the German nation.<sup>30</sup> At one level this was the result of the Federal Republic coming to see itself in an historical perspective, as a state with a population that had begun to form its own traditions.<sup>31</sup> Also by the late 1960s FRG citizens had come to look at national unification as being unattainable in the foreseeable future.<sup>32</sup> Preventing this dynamic from reaching fruition was precisely what Brandt sought to achieve by seeking contractually to regularize relations between the two German states.

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<sup>27</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 266.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>29</sup>Willy Brandt in Social Democratic Party of Germany: *A Programme for Government*, Neue Vorwärts: Bonn, 1961, p. 20-21.

<sup>30</sup>Gebhard Schweigler in Krippendorf and Rittberger, (eds) *The Foreign Policy of West Germany*, German Political Studies, vol 4, Sage: London, 1980, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup>W. Besson *The Federal Republic's National Interest, Aussenpolitik* (English Language Edition), vol. 21, pt 2, 1970, p. 123.

<sup>32</sup>Peter Merkl in Hanrieder, (ed.), *West German Foreign Policy: 1947-1979*, 1980, p. 27.



## The Impact of the Wall

The erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was viewed by the SPD as an indication of the limitations of Adenauer's policy of strength and the reality that East Germany would not collapse by unremitting pressure by the Federal Republic and the West. Moreover, it was a widely held view that such pressures would only make the GDR leadership even more defensive and repressive towards its own population. Thus it was the conviction of the party that it was time to rethink West German policy away from an exclusive emphasis on reunification (based on elimination of the GDR) to policies developed to improve conditions within the East German state. Thus the commitment of *Ostpolitik* was a concentration on improved relations with East Germany and improvement of living conditions and human rights in the GDR.

Brandt recognized that there was no meaningful Allied response as long as people were being shot whilst attempting to flee the GDR into West Berlin. For example, the case of Peter Fechter, who in full view of Allied Military personnel, was allowed to bleed to death among the barbed wire of the West Berlin-GDR border in 1962, made it crystal clear that despite Allied claims to a responsibility for the whole of Germany, nothing could or would be done which might endanger the *status quo*.<sup>33</sup>

Adding to the acceptance of the geo-political *status quo* was yet another factor. The post-war generation had by 1966 placed the economic well-being of their state above the idea of national reunification. The explanation lies primarily in the success of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. By 1969, as little as 6% of the FRG population considered national unification to be the most important task of the Federal government.<sup>34</sup> Brandt admitted that "the aim of all-German policy - reunification in peace and freedom - has receded further and grown more difficult of achievement."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>See Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>34</sup>R. Tilford, in Tilford, (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political change in Germany*, 1975, p. 31.

<sup>35</sup>Willy Brandt, *Was Können wir für Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands tun?*, 1955, p. 5.

Thus when Willy Brandt embarked upon his *Deutschlandpolitik* as Chancellor in 1969, he was fully aware of the obstacles. First, there had been developments throughout Germany through which Germans were becoming estranged from one another. Secondly, the attitude of the German states' neighbors and allies was not conducive towards German unification.<sup>36</sup> Thus Brandt had to overcome domestic lack of interest in the GDR. He also had to devise a formula which offered some hope of the eventual dissolution of the contemporary political divide in Germany, which would be of such a nature that it not only met Germany's security requirements but also was non-threatening to the maintenance of "peace" in Europe.<sup>37</sup> In an *International Affairs* article of 1970, Albert noted the paradox associated with Brandt's *Deutschlandpolitik*.

The West Germans want two kinds of greater unity. On the one hand national union and on the other hand political union comprising the nations of Western Europe. These two goals are contradictory and though no West German politician can admit to this in so many words, they must all know it at heart.<sup>38</sup>

In order to accomplish his goal of keeping the two Germanies together, Brandt was compelled to establish some sort of connection with the ruling East German government. This was necessary because the system of the GDR demanded it. In order to affect the population in the GDR, contacts would have to go through the ruling government.<sup>39</sup> In the beginning, his attempts received a critical reception.

In initially rejecting Brandt's overtures and ideas, the SED was pursuing its policy of *Abgrenzung* (demarcation) from the Federal Republic based upon the premise that the German nation was divided by "imperialist forces" between 1945-55 and that two distinct national entities had emerged in the two German states. Any notion of continuing national community as desired by the FRG was consequently deemed to be interference in the GDR's internal affairs.<sup>40</sup> By establishing

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<sup>36</sup>R. Tilford in Tilford, (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political change in Germany*, 1975, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup>Willy Brandt, *Links Und Frei*, 1982, p. 410.

<sup>38</sup>G. Albert, "The Brandt Doctrine of the two states in Germany," *International Affairs*, Vol. XLVI, part 2, 1970, p. 302.

<sup>39</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>40</sup>The SPD in general and Herbert Wehner, Helmut Schmidt and Brandt himself in particular, were heavily criticised throughout 1970 by the GDR. Brandt, Schmidt, and Wehner were denounced as "rightists" pursuing CDU/CSU policy. It was also alleged that the SPD/FDP coalition was pursuing imperialist policies on behalf of the USA, and that a genuine EPO could

*Abgrenzung*, the SED set out to establish a national identity for the GDR population based around identification with the goals and values of the SED. In so doing the SED was also admitting that the vast majority of FRG Germans were either hostile or antipathetic towards it. Gebhard Schweigler noted the general feeling of the time:

In the eyes of the Western world Germany is in fact the FRG and the GDR is something else. The underlying question is whether there is any nation left to preserve, because if there is not, FRG/GDR relations can only be maintained on the basis of two foreign countries.<sup>41</sup>

The East German government was encouraging the people of the GDR to form links with their socialist compatriots in the Soviet Union. For Walter Ulbricht, the East German head of State from 1950 until 1971, the GDR was the socialist state of German nationality and a firm partner of the USSR.<sup>42</sup> Ideological affinity was seen as being more important than ethnicity and cultural and historical heritage. Brandt disagreed:

I just want to explain what I hold to be the truth. National unity still exists. German unity depends on many factors: not primarily on the constitution, but on what we do; not primarily on what is written in agreements, but on the extent to which we win other nations as friends; not on Potsdam, 1945, but on healing the European split in the 70s, 80s, and-if necessary-the 90s.<sup>43</sup>

Yet he admitted:

German unification is a prospect, neither more nor less. That we do not gamble it away depends on all of us who are politically responsible in the Federal Republic, taking into consideration the limited power of the Republic, the rights of the Four Powers, the interests of all our European neighbors. Our aim must be, as stated by Herbert Wehner, to help the true sovereign - the German people - come into its own.<sup>44</sup>

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only come about if the Federal Republic first recognised the GDR in international law. See *Neues Deutschland* 14 May 1970, 6 June 1970, and 9 December 1970.

<sup>41</sup>Gebhard Schweigler, *National Consciousness in Divided Germany*, 1975, p. 59.

<sup>42</sup>Richard Löwenthal, *Von Kalten Krieg Zur Ostpolitik*, 1974, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, pp. 287-288.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 288.

When the SPD formed the first postwar socialist-led coalition in October 1969, Chancellor Brandt and FDP Foreign Minister Walter Scheel immediately agreed to "respect the *status quo* in all respects."<sup>45</sup> In his policy statement to the *Bundestag* on October 28, 1969, Brandt said:

[T]he object of our practical political work in the years immediately ahead is to preserve the unity of the nation by removing the relationship between the two parts of Germany from the area of conflict. ... [W]e must arrive at a *modus vivendi* and proceed to cooperation.<sup>46</sup>

This constituted a three-fold aim in Brandt's *Ostpolitik*: improved relations with the Soviet Union; normal relations with the Eastern European states; and a *modus vivendi* between the two parts of Germany.<sup>47</sup>

Brandt wanted a "*modus vivendi*," which was composed essentially of three elements:

- acceptance of post-war borders and non-aggression;
- the avoidance of a final, legally binding settlement of the German question; and
- no impairment of West Berlin's political status.<sup>48</sup>

The process of change was built upon contributions from all sides, but the original stimulus came as a result of the construction of the Berlin Wall. Egon Bahr, the chief architect of *Ostpolitik*, expressed it thus:

In Berlin it became clear in the most brutal way, where the border lies with East and West, that no-one could reach beyond the wall ...

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<sup>45</sup>Willy Brandt, "Regierungserklärung vom 28. Oktober 1969," *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, no. iv, p. 12; See also Similar statements in Willy Brandt, "Rede vor dem Deutschen Bundestag vom 17. Juni 1970," *Texte zur Deutschlandpolitik*, no. iv, pp. 41-52 *passim*; and Peter Bender, *Die Ostpolitik Willy Brandt Oder die Kunst des Selbstverständlichen* Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1972, p. 50.

<sup>46</sup>Willy Brandt, "Die Regierungserklärung Willy Brandts," 28 October 1969, *Im Deutschen Bundestag: Deutschland und Ostpolitik* 2, 1973, p. 249.

<sup>47</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 272.

<sup>48</sup>Arnulf Baring *Machtwechsel: Die Ära Brandt-Scheel*, Stuttgart, 1982, p. 256.



one must make an attempt despite the wall, so that the people on one side could again visit their relatives on the other side.<sup>49</sup>

With the building of the Wall, Brandt and Bahr, together with their then close colleagues in West Berlin, Heinrich Albertz and Klaus Schütz, had been forced to devise a new *Ostpolitik* for the reasons outlined by Bahr. The SPD was forced to sever its last organizational links with the GDR population with the closing of eight offices in East Berlin.<sup>50</sup> Thus the policy initiative of autumn 1969 had clearly been foreshadowed by events in Berlin which culminated in the building of the Berlin Wall and in light of the human consequences of the division in Berlin.<sup>51</sup>

Brandt was furthermore concerned about the increasing use of the terms "West" and "East" as designations for the two halves of Berlin.<sup>52</sup> Brandt saw such developments as being symptomatic of a wider phenomenon, the waning of pan-German national consciousness. By 1969, it was clear to Brandt as his support for the ideas of Egon Bahr's strategy (first articulated in 1963 at his famous Tutzing speech) of *Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through *rapprochement*) showed, that the Germans were becoming emotionally estranged from one another.<sup>53</sup> Brandt seems to have been acutely aware that if something was not done to halt the process, the day might come when, despite the common German language and heritage between the two states, they would find that they had virtually nothing in common. In such an event, the people themselves would not only feel divided from one another, but would quite simply be uninterested in one another.<sup>54</sup> Brandt was also conscious that such attitudes historically characterized the relationships between the German speaking states and principalities of Europe.

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<sup>49</sup>W. Hahn, "West Germany's Ostpolitik, The Grand Design of Egon Bahr," *Orbis*, vol. 16, part 4, 1973, p. 862. This view was confirmed in an interview by the author with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>50</sup>Pröwe in Benz and Graml, (ed.), *Aspekte Deutscher Aussenpolitik im 20 Jahrhundert*, 1976, p. 252.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 250.

<sup>52</sup>Richard Löwenthal, *Von Kalten Krieg Zur Ostpolitik* Seewald Verlag: Stuttgart, 1974, p. 65.

<sup>53</sup>Willy Brandt, *Was Können Wir für die Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands tun?*, 1955, p. 6; for a review of Bahr's *Wandel durch Annäherung* see Egon Bahr, "Den Luxus rigoroser Gesinnungsethik konnte sich niemand leisten," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 February 1992; and Egon Bahr *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland*, 1991, pp. 11-17.

<sup>54</sup>Trevertin in Peter Merkl, (ed.), *West German Foreign Policy Dilemmas and Directions*, 1982, p. 14.

## Re-aligning FRG Policies

Brandt and Bahr had to balance their goals against the strict demands from the GDR leadership for *de jure* recognition of their existence. Brandt's most important goal was to make the Wall more porous. In order to achieve this, he had to convince the GDR that he was at least willing to listen to their demands. Yet, as Brandt stated, "[I]n the DDR (*sic*) there are dominating forces which constantly make new demands. It must be recognized that these forces are exceptionally obstinate. ... The DDR (*sic*) demands from us diplomatic recognition."<sup>55</sup>

At the beginning of his Chancellorship, a basic objective which Brandt sought to fulfill *vis-à-vis* the GDR was to end allegations that the Federal Republic discriminated against the GDR at every possible opportunity. Clearly, this meant that the Federal Republic had to be prepared to recognize the GDR. This was something which all previous Federal governments had refused to do, and by taking this step Brandt was able to fulfill the notion of compatibility. William E. Paterson explains:

In his governmental declaration of October 1969 Brandt referred to "two states of one German nation," which, while stopping short of full international recognition of the GDR, also, by implication, ruled out German reunification for the foreseeable future. Indeed Brandt's government declaration of 1969 was the first not to use the term "reunification." The Chancellor argued that the pursuit of Adenauer's policies emphasizing the primacy of reunification had resulted in atrophy in contacts between East and West Germany by encouraging the government of the GDR to maintain its defensive posture.<sup>56</sup>

However, this change did not represent a complete break with the past. Brandt had always been in favor of an active *Ostpolitik* to be carried out at both governmental and non-governmental levels. However, it was the physical proof of the Soviet Union's resolution of 13 August 1961 that caused Brandt to realize that in order to bring about any meaningful change in Germany, the Federal government would have to lead by example and face the reality of the GDR's existence as a state.

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<sup>55</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 284.

<sup>56</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 146.

Importantly, in offering negotiations with the GDR on the basis of non-discrimination, Brandt was re-aligning FRG policies. After Brandt became Chancellor, he was able to convince his European allies that the entire sweep of his European policies was not some reckless unilateral initiative, which either by design or accident would bring the entire European structure crashing down. He was able to do this by making judicious initiatives in *Ostpolitik* counter-balanced with an earnest *Westpolitik*.

In this, he was able to prevent FRG isolation within the Western Alliance, despite the fact that his policies set alarm bells ringing in some quarters of Washington. Such fears grew after Brandt became Chancellor and embarked upon his *Ostpolitik*. The strains upon FRG-USA relations which had arisen in Adenauer's last years of office, together with arguments during the mid-1960s over the apportionment of the cost of maintaining US troops in the FRG, as well as the arguments over the abortive MLF (Multilateral Force) project had awakened doubts about the reliability of the Federal Republic. These doubts, which particularly concerned the FRG's American "Founding Fathers" McCloy, Clay, and Ascheson, were re-awakened by Brandt.<sup>57</sup> A view was voiced in Washington which supposed that Brandt was taking the Federal Republic down the road to a "new-Rapallo."<sup>58</sup> As Brandt and Bahr knew, the only way to Berlin was through Moscow.<sup>59</sup> However, Brandt was able to harness his policies to those of his allies, precisely because he had an overall view of the place of *Ostpolitik* within a wider *détente*.

Brandt stated:

The secrecy-charged atmosphere that made the word "Rapallo" a symbol and a nightmare to Western statesmen was, and obviously is still to this day, hard to eradicate. In that treaty we ended the state of war with Russia. It included economic cooperation and a most-favored-nation clause, and formulated a mutual renunciation of war indemnities. Many who talk about Rapallo do not know this. The contents of the treaty show, in contrast to today's situation, that

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<sup>57</sup>Morgan, Washington and Bonn: A case study in Alliance politics, *International Affairs*, vol. 47, no 3, 1971, p. 489.

<sup>58</sup>Hillenbrand in Hanrieder, (ed.), *West German Foreign Policy: 1947-1979* Westview: Boulder, 1980, p. 82-83.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

these cannot be repeated, notwithstanding any fundamental changes in the world. Its essence - the restoration of normal and, if possible, friendly relations between Germany and the Soviet Union, remains a task that cannot be performed by any single feat of sudden dramatic nature. It demands tenacity and intense, quiet work, but also the readiness of the Soviet Union to join with us in examining such a course.<sup>60</sup>

Brandt and Bahr sought to create inter-German *rapprochement* so that the two states would move from a state of non-recognition to a position of *geregeltes Nebeneinander* (organized co-existence), via a policy of small steps.<sup>61</sup> Naturally, it was hoped that in so doing the substance of the German nation would be maintained. Once the position of *geregeltes Nebeneinander* had been reached, the German national community could be further strengthened by greater co-operation so that the two states could come to a relationship of *geregeltes Miteinander* (organized co-operation). Paterson sums up these objectives and costs thus:

A central thrust of *Ostpolitik* and of the normalization of relations with the states of Eastern Europe was a new relationship with the GDR. From the perspective of the Bonn government, the new relationship was based on the concept of "*Wandel durch Annäherung*" (change through *rapprochement*) first articulated by Egon Bahr and Willy Brandt in 1963 as a response to the challenge posed by the Berlin Wall. Brandt and Bahr argued that a continually hostile attitude to the GDR and a denial of all state attributes to it (the policy of all federal governments hitherto) had not led to the collapse of the GDR but had simply strengthened the repressive character of the regime. In their view some accommodation with the regime in East Germany would encourage its rulers to behave less repressively to their own population. Equally importantly, the regime would feel free to make the borders more porous, to allow renewed contact between the citizens of the two German states. The new policy towards East Germany was therefore squarely based on the doctrine of "two states of one German nation." This mirrored a decline in the popular belief of the likelihood of reunification.<sup>62</sup>

Recognition of the GDR was a first step, but it was not without difficulties. Once negotiations were underway, another more intractable problem reared its head.

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<sup>60</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, pp. 267-268.

<sup>61</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>62</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 141.



Whereas Brandt was insistent that the populations of the two states constituted a single nation, the SED insisted that not only were there two states, but two nations. Predictably, the SED was less than impressed by Brandt's initial overtures. The SED's response to Bonn's offer of talks was rejected for a number of reasons. First, the SED sought recognition of the GDR by the FRG in international law, i.e., recognition as a fully sovereign state. Naturally, for Brandt to have agreed to such a demand would have been an admission that his entire strategy was flawed. Central to his concerns was the preservation of the German nation. Recognition of the GDR in international law would also have been an acceptance of the SED's view of the national question. The SED rejected the notion of "two states in one nation," precisely because they rejected Brandt's "one nation" thesis. The SED accused the Brandt government of merely being the ideological successor of all previous Federal administrations.<sup>63</sup> Brandt emphasized and re-emphasized that the path to *rapprochement* with the GDR would be long and arduous. His aim was to proceed from confrontation to co-operation: "*Über ein geregeltes Nebeneinander zu einem Miteinander zu kommen.*"<sup>64</sup>

Brandt's vision for Germany clearly rested in connection with Europe. He viewed Europe, as did Schumacher, as a way in which to overcome the *status quo* which relied on the superpowers and divided Europe. Brandt expressed the necessity of bringing both parts of Germany "closer together" and bringing them together was "an historical process" which was "a European matter." But he added "one must want this process in sight and begin it. Certainly, it lies in the German interest."<sup>65</sup>

Brandt saw himself as being the initiator of a long-term process that would, as much as anything else, be dependent upon the population wishing it to succeed. Thus in the context of national division, the Germans themselves had to maintain this desire, hence Brandt's necessity of, in the medium term, doing something which would help maintain the substance of the nation. Also, like Brandt himself, the German people would have to be conscious of the wider European responsibilities they bore.

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<sup>63</sup> *Neues Deutschland* 6 June 1970.

<sup>64</sup> Willy Brandt, *Deutsche Politik in Europäischer Verantwortung* Sonderdruck aus dem Bulletin des Presse und Information Amt der Bundesregierung, no. 139, Bonn, 1967 p. 28.

<sup>65</sup> Willy Brandt, *Peace: Writings and Speeches*. Neue Gesellschaft: Bonn, 1971, p. 104.

In Brandt's January 1970 State of the Nation speech, after first describing the nation as a common band surrounding Germany, Brandt acknowledged that the two states had a completely different attitude to the national question.<sup>66</sup> In other words, there was a hint, if nothing more, that the Federal Republic would be willing to agree to differ with the GDR in order to facilitate progress. Nevertheless, Brandt was not prepared to renounce the German people's right to self-determination. He was compelled to stand firm on this both morally and in accordance with the Federal Republic's Basic Law. He believed in self-determination as a principle which the Germans were entitled to in common with all other peoples. He hoped to see the German people one day exercise that right, but he was also aware that German unity was only a "chance" that could not be gambled away.<sup>67</sup>

According to the new formula "two German states in one nation," the Social Democratic regime conceded that the GDR should be considered a legitimate German state, and therefore deserving of *de facto* recognition. But at the same time the emphasis that Brandt's government placed on the existence of an overarching German nation underscored the "special" character of any inter-German ties that would result. While Ulbricht was quick to reply that the Federal Republic had hardly met his regime's demands for full, *de jure* recognition, Bonn's implicit agreement to respect the territorial integrity of the East German state was sufficient to bring Soviet pressure for *détente* to bear upon East Berlin. The result was not simply Ulbricht's ouster in 1971, because of his outspoken opposition to the developments around him, but the eventual achievement of accords treating both the city of Berlin and relations between the two German states themselves.

In order to render the *Ostpolitik* compatible with the objectives of the FRG's partners, tenets of previous policy such as the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* (claim to sole representation of all Germans by the FRG) as pursued between 1949-69 had to be either modified or jettisoned. This *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* was based on the argument that only those Germans living in the Federal Republic had been able to vote for a freely elected government. The Federal government was thus the

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<sup>66</sup>*Deutsche Bundestag*, sechster Wahlperiode, 1970, p. 842.

<sup>67</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 288.

only legitimate German government and its primary duty, constitutionally anchored in the Basic Law, was to work for German reunification. The Federal Republic thus continually proclaimed a national interest of all Germans in self-determination, an aspiration which it alone could legitimately represent.<sup>68</sup> In so doing two objectives were achieved. First, a philosophical vision of a "better" world became actualized as practical politics. Secondly, the goals of an individual state, the FRG, were rendered conterminous to and compatible with the aspirations of both the Superpowers and partners of the Federal Republic.

Furthermore, Brandt's *Ostpolitik* implied that the *Staatskerntheorie* (nucleus of the state theory) and the *Schrumpfstaatstheorie* (shrinking of the state theory) were undermined. The former claimed that the FRG formed the nucleus of the state for the whole of Germany of which the GDR was a part. Accordingly, Federal law applied *de jure*, if not *de facto* to the GDR. The protagonists of the latter theory held that the "Reich" had shrunk to the area of the Federal Republic, with the alleged consequence that all other areas of the Reich were in a condition of "state free" existence.<sup>69</sup> Such theories were utilized by successive Federal governments before Brandt as jurisprudential support for the continued non-recognition of the GDR. In calling upon the two German states to recognize one another, Brandt not only dealt a blow to constitutional lawyers, he acknowledged that if Germany did exist, it no longer did so as a conventional *Staatsnation* (Nation state).

However, given the alternative of FRG isolation from the *détente* process, continuing stagnation in inter-German relations and a possible complete loss of pan-German national consciousness, Brandt felt that he had to act. The CDU/CSU charged that any policy of recognition of the GDR would mean the *de facto* abandonment of the GDR population to the SED. Brandt himself was well aware of that risk. In abandoning the *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*, the Federal government

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<sup>68</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 140.

<sup>69</sup>See the judgement of the Constitutional Court on the Basic Treaty of 31 July 1973 in *Bundesverfassungsgericht Entscheidungen*, vol. 36, pp. 1-37; see also Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, p. 391.

would accept its own legitimacy, and therefore assert itself as a focus for West German national identity.<sup>70</sup> Brandt felt that despite that risk he had to be decisive.

In response to charges that the SPD was abandoning reunification, Brandt replied that, "we must recognize the facts of today if we would change them" and charged that the CDU was clinging-to "empty formulas."<sup>71</sup> Explicit acceptance of the fact that reunification was not practical policy would, it was hoped, enable the East German government to feel free enough to liberalize contacts between the two states and thus strengthen the sense of *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl* (feeling of belonging together).<sup>72</sup> Theo Sommer, a supporter of Brandt's and Bahr's policy, explained the practical aspects of *Ostpolitik*: "we do not seek a territorial, but a qualitative change in the *status quo* ... for us the goal of reunification is less important than the quality of the divided state."<sup>73</sup>

On a practical level, this meant an emphasis on social, cultural, and economic contacts with the GDR. Leaders of the SPD genuinely felt an obligation to try to make life easier for the residents of the GDR in a material sense. In order to achieve this, political contacts had to be strengthened. Action for Brandt was thus humanitarian:

Understandably, the East Berlin regime is concerned about political equality; also about certain abstract formalities. But it must also be understood that the Federal government will only agree to discussion on many matters if this also results in concessions for the people of divided Germany. The welfare of the State is worth little if it is not also the welfare of its citizens.<sup>74</sup>

In Brandt's new system the Hallstein doctrine, which argued that recognition of the GDR would be considered an unfriendly act by the Federal Republic, became more and more politically costly to uphold and, from the late 1960s onwards, it

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<sup>70</sup>J. K. Sowden, *The German Question 1945-73* Bradford University Press: Bradford, 1975, p. 289.

<sup>71</sup>Peter Bender, *Die Ostpolitik Willy Brandt Oder die Kunst des Selbstverständlichen* Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1972, pp. 49 and 62.

<sup>72</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 146.

<sup>73</sup>Theo Sommer, *Die Zeit*, 20 September 1968.

<sup>74</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 297.



began to be breached.<sup>75</sup> Under the Hallstein doctrine, only the USSR was permitted, because of its centrality to any possible reunification negotiations, to maintain dual diplomatic relations. Moreover, the fundamental principle of the doctrine proved false: the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 did not immediately herald the long-awaited collapse of the GDR but, if anything, the regime appeared to consolidate itself after 1961.<sup>76</sup>

### Negotiations Begin

The government of the DDR (*sic*) says it is ready for negotiations too. We have taken cognizance of this. We are ready, just as with other members of the Warsaw Pact. ... Now that an exchange of views on the subject is already in progress with the Soviets ... we think it feasible to enter into corresponding negotiations with the government of the DDR (*sic*) as well. These negotiations would offer a good framework within which, in a broad-minded exchange of opinions, we could discuss all the problems important to a harmonious relationship.<sup>77</sup>

Brandt came to offer negotiation with the GDR at the government level. He did this because the climate of *détente* demanded it. However, the climate of change included more than just *détente*. There was serious concern that the political division of Germany was leading to the growth of two separate nations in the two German states. If such a development was not arrested there would be no point in *Ostpolitik*. Brandt, who was fully aware of the SED's negative attitude, was seeking to preserve the German nation as a whole because he saw that by preserving common links between people of a common heritage, the task of overall European reconciliation would be facilitated and within that, the German people could be brought together. Brandt expressed his desire as follows:

Why did we speak of special relationships? Not to uphold the concept of guardianship, but neither to sustain the absurdity of our peculiar status. It is easier to travel from the Federal Republic to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania than to the DDR (*sic*). Even from the DDR (*sic*) it is easier to travel to those countries

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<sup>75</sup>See Roger Tilford, "Introduction," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 141.

<sup>77</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 297.

than to the other part of Germany. And of course let us not even go into the problems of traveling between West Berlin and East Berlin.<sup>78</sup>

For the first time since 1949, Bonn's policies towards the FRG's eastern neighbors, rather than issues of post-war reconstruction or the Federal Republic's role in the Atlantic Alliance, achieved greater salience. Fortunately for Brandt a number of factors conspired to aid him in this endeavor. First, there was little disagreement among the main parties over the FRG's role in the Western Alliance. Secondly, post-war reconstruction was at an end, and the SPD had gained as a party which as a member of the Grand Coalition had aided in the solution of the country's first economic crisis. Thirdly, the CDU/CSU was greatly concerned with preventing a loss of support to the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) and in so doing lost the support of many "liberal" supporters who switched their support to either the SPD or the FDP. Essentially the electorate was asked to elect a government which sought reconciliation with Eastern Europe and the other German state. At another level, the "international community" was waiting to see whether the FRG electorate would lend its support to an incipient coalition that was in step with the international climate of *détente*.<sup>79</sup> Brandt expressed the balance of his new policies as such:

Furthermore, we have never thought we could carry on an active Eastern policy and a successful policy of *détente* at the expense of alienating the West. Anyone who interprets foreign policy in terms of swinging pendulums misunderstands both its own laws and - in our case - the position of Germany. It was always wrong to interpret the decision of the Federal Republic in favor of Western democracy as a decision against Central and Eastern Europe. I said, in this connection, that in foreign policy there were for me no spoiled darlings, no favorite children, and no stepchildren, but only the vital interests of the state and the nation - above all, the interest of securing the peace.<sup>80</sup>

Brandt was intent on three things. First, in the short-term, establishing formal relations with the GDR. Secondly, in the medium-term, to utilize these relations to maintain the substance of the German nation. Thirdly, to build upon these

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>79</sup>K. Birnbaum, *East and West Germany, a Modus Vivendi*, Saxon House: Farnborough, 1973, p. 31.

<sup>80</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 270.

relations and increased contacts as an aid to the construction of a European Peace Order within which reunification could come about.

In practical terms this resulted in the SPD's support for normalization of relations with the German Democratic Republic in order to facilitate negotiations on concrete issues that would contribute to preserving a sense of national identity and improving conditions for Germans in the Democratic Republic. Improving conditions in the GDR and preserving the sense of nationhood generated the first concrete goals of *Ostpolitik*. They included improving communications between the two German states, by rail, road, mail and telephone services. They hoped to make personal contact, especially for family members on different sides of the border, easier and to make the exchange of gifts and medicines a normal procedure.<sup>81</sup> Brandt realized, as he stated that "[F]or centuries, Germany was a bridge between East and West." He added, [W]e are striving to build anew the shattered bridge, better, sturdier, and more reliable.<sup>82</sup> But he was also aware that "[T]his responsibility is equally great on both sides - not only in Bonn, but also in East Berlin. There must be action on both sides."<sup>83</sup>

Arrangements for foreign policy-making, particularly in the early period of the Brandt-Scheel government, reflected a new dominance of the Chancellor's Office. The state secretary of the Foreign Ministry had to report to the daily situation conference in the Chancellor's Office, while Egon Bahr took part in the so-called *Direktorenbesprechungen* (directors' conference) in the Foreign Ministry. This pattern of relationships, reminiscent of the Adenauer era, was modified after the incident in April 1970 when it became known that the state secretary of the Foreign Ministry had conducted a secret correspondence with Wladyslaw Gomulka, the Polish Prime Minister, at Brandt's behest, without the foreign minister being informed. Thereafter Scheel's influence increased, since it became a matter of first priority that the FDP should be seen to be achieving some measure of success in the field of foreign policy. Despite this, Egon Bahr continued to undertake many of the detailed negotiations of *Ostpolitik*.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>*Im Deutschen Bundestag: Deutschland und Ostpolitik* 2, 1973, pp. 316-19.

<sup>82</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 273.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>84</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, pp. 134-135.

In the second Brandt-Scheel government (1972-4) the position of the Foreign Office was strengthened, reflecting the greatly increased strength of the FDP. At the same time Bahr was accorded a much less prominent role in foreign policy-making. The responsibility for the coordination of European policy, which had resided *de facto* in Frau Focke while she was parliamentary state secretary in the Chancellor's Office, was formally transferred to the newly created parliamentary state secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Hans Apel.<sup>85</sup>

For Brandt, the normalization of relations with Eastern Europe was an over-riding priority on three principal grounds. First, normal relations with Eastern Europe were seen as a pre-condition for progress on the central plane of German-German relations, including some easing of the Berlin problem. Secondly, it was part of a process of political emancipation leading to a decrease in the reliance of the Federal Republic on the Western allies. Finally, there was an important moral dimension, symbolized by Brandt's gesture of falling to his knees at the site of the Warsaw Ghetto during his visit there in 1970. This moral dimension recognized that German action in Eastern Europe in the Second World War had not only fatally compromised German territorial rights in the area, but had been of such a traumatic character that it continued to impose obligations on the Germans to make some sort of recompense.<sup>86</sup>

## Treaties

The exercise of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* rested in achieving formal ties with the Soviet Union and the GDR in the form of treaties. Formal contacts between the FRG and GDR would accomplish the first step of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, i.e., normalizing relations between West and East Germany. It was believed that normalization would create a new atmosphere in which the border between the two Germanies would become more porous.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, Brandt blazed the trail for treaties with

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<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 146; see also, William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 139.

<sup>87</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 141.





his previous statements on the German national question. Treaties between the two Germanies would, no doubt, contribute to a certain upgrading of the legitimacy of the GDR and diminish the Federal Republic's claim to speak for all-German interests. This was a price that Brandt and Bahr were willing to pay. Above all, they were concerned with the living conditions in the East, as was expressed by Brandt when he stated "[L]et me make one thing perfectly clear: A treaty between the DDR (*sic*) and ourselves must not become a smokescreen concealing unchanged circumstances oppressive to humanity.<sup>88</sup>

The SPD's advocacy of normalization of relations with East Berlin and Moscow was fundamentally linked to stabilization of the status of Berlin. After a quarter century of intermittent crisis, securing the rights of access to Berlin and the association of Berlin with the Federal Republic was central to the SPD's first concrete goals in *Ostpolitik*.<sup>89</sup> Normalization was furthermore attempted with treaties to bring the two Germanies together. As the political situation dictated, Soviet approval was needed. Brandt expressed his agenda as such:

We have not let ourselves be deflected, either by cross-fire from abroad or by a lack of understanding in our own country, from seeking an objective dialogue with the Soviet Union. I will not be made to deviate from this goal, nor shall I let myself be deflected from energetically continuing a dialogue which was initiated with so much difficulty, as purposefully and as intensively as possible. It is well known that big advances cannot be achieved swiftly. The terrain must be prepared, and for that, there must be favorable circumstances and necessary intervals of time.<sup>90</sup>

What later came to be called *Ostverträge* (Eastern treaties) were basically made up of four agreements: the Treaty of Moscow signed in August 1970, the Warsaw Treaty of 7 December 1970, the Four Powers Agreement of 3 September 1971, and the Basic Treaty between East and West Germany of 12 December 1972.<sup>91</sup> The initiating factor for this avalanche of diplomatic events was an agreement

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<sup>88</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 284.

<sup>89</sup>*Im Deutschen Bundestag: Deutschland und Ostpolitik* 2, 1973, pp. 316-19.

<sup>90</sup>Willy Brandt quoted in Klaus Harpprecht, *Willy Brandt: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, 1972, p. 268.

<sup>91</sup>For a concise look at the details of the Basic Treaty see Geoffrey K. Roberts, "The Ostpolitik and Relations Between the Two Germanies," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 79-80.

with the Kremlin.<sup>92</sup> In an initiative by the Federal government, Bonn's ambassador in Moscow, Allardt, met the Soviet Foreign Minister, Gromyko. Because these talks soon reached a stalemate, Egon Bahr was sent to set up a direct link. After more than fifty hours of talks, the so-called Bahr Paper emerged and was leaked to the public on 22 May 1970. In this paper, which anticipated the later Moscow Treaty, the federal government committed itself to respecting the territorial integrity of all European states and the inviolability of their frontiers, including the Oder-Neisse line and the demarcation line between the Federal Republic and the GDR. In the Bahr Paper the Federal Republic also committed itself to support the admission of the two German states into the United Nations, while not accepting the Soviet demand for full international recognition of the GDR.<sup>93</sup> It contained all the elements which were later to become the backbone of the Moscow treaty.<sup>94</sup>

The Moscow Treaty itself was negotiated and signed in July and August 1970 by Walter Scheel, the Foreign Minister. The position of the Federal Republic was strengthened in two ways by Scheel. In order to safeguard the long-term position of the federal government and to quiet domestic opposition, a "letter on German unity" was presented to the Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko by West German Chancellor Office State Secretary Egon Bahr at the signing of the treaty, reaffirming the federal government's commitment to German unity.<sup>95</sup> Equally significant, ratification was made subject to a successful outcome of four-power negotiations on Berlin - an issue of central concern to the federal government.<sup>96</sup>

It should be noted first of all that the Moscow Treaty was the first agreement ever signed by a West German government which referred to the German Democratic

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<sup>92</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>93</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 147.

<sup>94</sup>Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, p. 391; see also Arnulf Baring *Machtwechsel: Die Ära Brandt-Scheel*, 1982, p. 341; and Egon Bahr *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland*, 1991.

<sup>95</sup>The letter on German Unity make it clear that the FRG, by signing the treaty, did not renounce the pursuit of a policy of peaceful reunification. Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, p. 391. See also "Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," in: Karl E. Birnbaum, *East and West Germany: A Modus Vivendi*, 1973, p. 111.

<sup>96</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 147.

Republic as a state. The signatories stated that they regarded "the frontiers of all States in Europe as inviolable such as they are on the date of signature of the present Treaty, including ... the frontier between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic."<sup>97</sup> Later, General Secretary Brezhnev would indicate that he saw some utility in making use of Bonn as a "talking partner" in Europe through the maintenance of a continuous dialogue on intimate concerns.<sup>98</sup> To the degree that such a new relationship could contribute to the loosening of the Federal Republic's ties with the United States, Soviet interests would also be served.

The coupling of the four-power negotiations on Berlin with the Moscow Treaty gave the Soviet Union an interest in a speedy outcome for the former. Neither German state took part in the Berlin negotiations but they were, of course, intensively consulted. The Western position was largely worked out by the Bonn group of Western ambassadors, plus the Federal government and the Berlin Senate. After prolonged negotiations the agreement was signed in 1971.<sup>99</sup> The central goal of Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was to make progress on German-German relations. Negotiations moved very quickly after the conclusion of the Berlin Agreement in September 1971 and the ratification of the Moscow and Warsaw treaties<sup>100</sup> in May 1972.<sup>101</sup>

The Basic Treaty (*Grundlagenvertrag*) between the two German states was negotiated on Brandt's behalf by Egon Bahr and was concluded in early November 1972. In the Basic Treaty both states agreed to support each other's membership of the United Nations and to establish diplomatic relations with each other, although their representatives were to be known as high commissioners rather than

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<sup>97</sup>"Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," in: Karl E. Birnbaum, *East and West Germany: A Modus Vivendi*, 1973, p. 110.

<sup>98</sup>*Washington Post*, 26 November, 1981.

<sup>99</sup>"Ansprache des Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Walter Ulbricht, am 9 Januar 1970 in Berlin," in: *Dokumente zur Aussenpolitik der DDR* 18 (1972): p. 577; see also William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 147.

<sup>100</sup>The Warsaw Treaty's third article declared that the Federal Republic and the People's Republic of Poland "shall take further steps towards full normalization and a comprehensive development of their mutual relations," an unmistakable expression of the goal of diplomatic recognition. See Karl E. Birnbaum, *East and West Germany: A Modus Vivendi*, p. 118.

<sup>101</sup>William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 148.

ambassadors. This formula had already been anticipated in the Bahr Paper during the Moscow negotiations. The federal government took care in the Basic Treaty of 1972, which established relations with the GDR, not to accord it full international recognition, never to speak of it as "*Ausland*" (foreign territory) and to attempt to uphold the openness of the German question.<sup>102</sup> Following the signing of the treaty, France, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with other NATO states, recognized the GDR as an autonomous state. *Ostpolitik* and especially the Basic Treaty were central to Brandt's resounding election triumph of November 1972 and represent the historic legacy of his Chancellorship.<sup>103</sup> Notwithstanding an almost total CDU/CSU constitutional challenge to the treaty, ratification by the *Bundestag* was forthcoming on May 11, 1973.<sup>104</sup> However, both the *Bundestag* and East German *Volkskammer* passed consenting laws to the treaty on June 6 and 13, allowing it to enter into force on June 21.

Article 1 of the Basic Treaty states that the FRG and the GDR "shall develop normal, good-neighborly relations with each other on the basis of equal rights."<sup>105</sup> It should be pointed out that the language "normal, good-neighborly relations" was identical with that chosen by Erich Honecker (East German Head of State from 1971 until 1989) in his Sofia address and subsequently included in East German announcements; yet Honecker also argued that the "agreements under international law" which would be concluded by the two states "on the basis of equal rights" did not address this issue of recognition between the Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic.

Similarly, Article 2 of the Basic Treaty emphasizes that East and West Germany were to undertake the responsibilities of states; however, there was no direct acknowledgment by either that the two states were "sovereign equals." It would be accurate to say that neither side realized its inner-German goals in the form that these had been stated publicly. The SED leadership could not claim that full

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<sup>102</sup> Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, p. 391. See also William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 142.

<sup>103</sup> William E. Paterson, "The Chancellor and Foreign Policy," in Stephen Padgett (ed.), *Adenauer to Kohl: The Development of the German Chancellorship*, 1994, p. 148.

<sup>104</sup> Karlheinz Niclauss, *Kontroverse Deutschlandpolitik* (Frankfurt: Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1977), pp. 101-102.

<sup>105</sup> *The Bulletin*, 20, no. 38, 14 November 1972, pp. 294.



diplomatic relations were created between the two German states as a result of the Basic Treaty, since embassies were not established. On the other hand, the Federal Government's requirement that the "unity of the nation" be upheld in an agreement was only implicitly satisfied, as the preamble simply indicated the existence of a "national question" and the "Letter on German Unity" took the form of a unilateral declaration. East Berlin never succeeded in obtaining a direct reference to the GDR as a "sovereign state" but an interpretation of "special relations" is supported mainly by making inferences from the treaty's passages, particularly the preamble and Article 9.<sup>106</sup>

After the election victory in 1972, Brandt and Bahr had hoped to push ahead first and foremost with conventional force reductions in the center of Europe. But the talks that came to be known as MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) got nowhere, while Chancellor Schmidt pursued his own, distinctive security policy based firmly on nuclear deterrence through the NATO alliance and classical precepts of the balance of power. Now, as differences with the Soviet Union over precisely these issues seemed to be leading rapidly to the end of *détente*, the time had come to make good what Horst Ehmke would call the "crucial deficit" of the first phase of *Ostpolitik*.<sup>107</sup>

After Brandt's resignation as Chancellor in 1974, *Ostpolitik* became less significant. Its prominence within the SPD remained high, as Brandt remained the ideological leader of the party; however, the new Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt (1974-1982), centered his federal policies around different issues. Helmut Schmidt succeeded Brandt as Chancellor on 16 May 1974 following the Guillaume spy scandal.<sup>108</sup>

While Brandt's central goals had been peace and political change in Europe, Schmidt was preoccupied with maintaining economic success. This necessarily

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<sup>106</sup>See Herman Axen's interpretation in "Herman Axen: Zwei Staaten - zwei Nationen. Deutsche Frage existiert nicht mehr." *Deutschland Archiv*, 6 April 1973, p. 415.

<sup>107</sup>*Neue Gesellschaft*, December 1987, p. 1073.

<sup>108</sup>One of Brandt's closest and personal advisors, Günter Guillaume, had long been a spy for East German intelligence and he was secretly privy to negotiations over the inter-German transit accord and the Basic Treaty. See Geoffrey K. Roberts, "The Ostpolitik and Relations Between the Two Germanies," in Roger Tilford (ed.), *The Ostpolitik and Political Change in Germany*, 1975, p. 88.

involved a downgrading in the importance of *Ostpolitik*, since Western Europe and the United States provided the frameworks of trading relations for the German economy. The treaty basis of *Ostpolitik* had already been accomplished by Brandt; the accent was now more on gradual and routine consolidation, and this was essentially the business of the Foreign and Economic Ministries. The change of American administration in 1980 and events in Afghanistan precipitated East-West confrontations which threatened to reverse the achievements of *Ostpolitik*, and Schmidt spent much of his last two years in office attempting to rescue *détente* in Europe from the rupture in superpower relations.

In his policy on the US alliance and deployment of nuclear missiles, Schmidt was distinctive in acting against the wishes of large sections of his own party; a notable contrast to the support Willy Brandt received from the SPD on *Ostpolitik*. The dispute on the issue of intermediate nuclear forces (INF) began with the Chancellor's speech to the International Institute for Strategic Studies meeting in London in 1977. Schmidt, like other German defense policy-makers, was worried by a growing imbalance between the capacities of the Warsaw Pact and NATO in medium-range nuclear systems. By 1977 the Soviet Union had deployed some 1,300 medium-range weapons including the SS-20 and "Backfire" bombers, while NATO had fewer than 400 aging weapons. Schmidt drew attention to this gap and suggested that policy attention be given to dealing with it. Schmidt's initiative was taken up by NATO, which in 1979 adopted the so-called Twin-track decision. This resolution envisaged negotiating with the Soviets to persuade them to remove their SS-20 missiles from Eastern Europe with the threat that, should these negotiations fail, NATO would deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles, including a large number of Pershing II and Cruise missiles, in the Federal Republic.

The NATO decision provoked a great deal of opposition in the Federal Republic. It gave rise to a large peace movement which organized a hectic program of petitions and demonstrations. Most threateningly for Schmidt, there was considerable opposition from within the SPD. NATO's move attracted predictable criticism from Bahr and Brandt, who in the 1970s had become increasingly critical of US policy and had already clashed with Schmidt on the neutron bomb issue. Especially worrying for Schmidt, it attracted bitter criticism from Herbert Wehner,

the leader of the SPD *Bundestagsfraktion*, who complained that the deployment of these weapons would turn the Federal Republic into a kind of stationary aircraft-carrier for the United States.

The opposition within the SPD to the stationing of Cruise and Pershing II missiles was clearly linked to the desire to preserve *détente*. Opposition to the stationing of the weapons became increasingly bound up with accusations that the Reagan presidency had brought *détente* to an end, and thus it continued to increase, particularly as negotiations proved fruitless and plans for deployment went ahead. A demonstration in Bonn against the imminent stationing of the missiles in October 1981 was the largest in the history of the Federal Republic and was supported, much to Schmidt's chagrin, by almost a quarter of the SPD *Bundestagsfraktion*.

This opposition to NATO missiles as well as to the party's own leader, demonstrated a shift in ideology which had been forming and which created fractionalisation within the SPD and its coalition partner (FDP). This schism with the SPD's coalition partner would eventually lead to the coalition's disintegration. Furthermore, it would also lead to a new "peace movement" with its policy manifestation known within the SPD as the "second phase of *Ostpolitik*." Bahr characterized this "second phase" as "the continuation of *Ostpolitik* in the military field." Security, he wrote, "is the key to everything."<sup>109</sup> Thus, division within the party and the new peace movement led to the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*.

The Social Democrats were forced into opposition at the end of 1982 when the Free Democrats crossed the floor of the *Bundestag* to install Helmut Kohl as Chancellor and the CDU/CSU to power. The 1980 elections had given the FDP a boost, enabling it to become more assertive with policy positions. The market-oriented policies of the FDP Economic Minister Otto Lambsdorf precipitated criticism from the trade unions and from within the SPD party itself. Intra-coalition conflicts concentrated on unemployment and the failure of the government to solve the issue. Schmidt was also under criticism for using personal influence in relation to US missiles in West Germany. On 17 September, the FDP ministers resigned and less than one month later switched their allegiance to the

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<sup>109</sup>*Zukunft*, 10 October, 1986, pp. 8-9.

CDU/CSU exercising successfully, for the first time, the "constructive vote of no-confidence" provided for in Article 67 of the Basic Law. The SPD was, therefore, in opposition with only 38.2% of the vote.

Although *Ostpolitik* differed from the new "second phase," there was a logical sequence of events which prompted its development. As will be seen in the next chapter, the "second phase" was based on the fear of nuclear devastation and was energized by fears that the superpowers were plummeting back into a new Cold-War posture. This new phase continued with Brandt's formulation, i.e., that reunification was not practical and that this posture would enable the East German government to liberalize contacts between the two states and strengthen the sense of *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*. Yet, it differed in the sense that political contacts under Brandt's federal leadership concentrated on humanitarian concerns and making the Wall more porous, while in contrast, the "second phase" concentrated on security concerns and would have little interest in making the Wall more porous. Furthermore, the SPD in the 1980s would continue relations "in the spirit of the Basic Treaty"; attempt to exhibit that it could continue *Ostpolitik* better than the CDU/CSU coalition; and exercise foreign policy in opposition as a means of demonstrating that it could govern again. For the SPD, the outcomes of *Ostpolitik* were just the beginning. As has been noted, "the treaty does not solve the German question; rather it leaves it more open than before."<sup>110</sup> Above all, the "second phase" would take the premise of *Ostpolitik* and expand on many of its points as well as constructing new ones.

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<sup>110</sup>"Denkschrift" in the Federal Press and Information Office, *Vertrag über die Grundlagen der Beziehungen zwischen der BRD und der DDR*, Bonn, 1973, p. 31; noted in op. cit., p. 85.



### *The SPD in the 1980s: Foreign and Security Policies*

Unquestionably the most important development affecting West German foreign [and] defense policy in the last decade has been the movement of the SPD away from its clear and unambiguous Atlanticist moorings to a hard to define and murky indecisiveness about defense policy. Neutralism, semi-neutralism, neo-neutralism, self-Finlandization were all terms applied to the increasingly dominant Brandt wing of the party. Egon Bahr, Horst Ehmke, Herbert Wehner, Erhard Eppler, Karsten Voigt, Andreas von Bülow, and most unreservedly, Oskar Lafontaine led the party away from support for the NATO deployments by 1983. In the party journals and meetings, clear and unambiguous criticism of the Soviet military buildup was largely replaced by more oblique criticism of both superpowers. Brandt and Bahr repeatedly urged more American concessions at the Geneva negotiations, while giving Soviet proposals the benefit of the doubt. Eppler and Voigt welcomed the development of "counter-experts" while assaulting the "*expertokratie*" and questioning the rationality of deterrence.<sup>1</sup>

As mentioned in the first chapter, the ideology shift of the Social Democrats in the late 1970s directly led to the formation of a new policy. This new policy, directed at foreign and security policy, was first labeled the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* by Karsten Voigt (SPD) in 1980.<sup>2</sup> This new approach focused attention away from its pragmatic Chancellor (Schmidt) and concentrated its new efforts towards the ideological party leader (Brandt).<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will discuss the reorganization of the SPD and its policies in the 1980s. The purpose of this chapter is not to detail foreign and security policy practices during the 1980s, but rather to describe the developments which facilitated the "new thinking" in the party which would eventually inspire the SPD-SED relationship. Moreover, SPD policy in fields other than foreign and

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>When asked, Karsten Voigt stated that the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was indeed coined by him in 1980. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995; for reference to the first usage of this term see Karsten D. Voigt "Schrittweiser Ausstieg aus dem Rüstungswettlauf: Nach dem Berliner Parteitag der SPD," *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, no. 1, 1980, p. 48; moreover, for a discussion on the significance of this term when first articulated by Voigt see Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD: 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Along with Brandt, Egon Bahr could also be viewed as a ideological leader in the SPD. During the period of *Ostpolitik* and after both Brandt and Schmidt always "had an ear for Bahr." See "Egon Bahr: Neue Vorwürfe. Plauderei im Politbüro," in *Focus*, no. 7, 13 February, 1995, p. 24. Moreover, in the field of security affairs, Bahr's notions captured much more attention within his party as the 1980s progressed.

security policy will be discussed in order to illustrate the convergence and discrepancies within the party prior to and after its thrust in opposition. Among the most important methods employed will be examination of SPD party programs throughout the early 1980s and the emergence of new, younger, members.

Unlike *Ostpolitik*, it is difficult to examine foreign policy practices of the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* because the party was in opposition; however, in comprehending the motivations of its leadership, through literature, speeches, party programs and interviews, one reaches an understanding of the process by which the SPD came to form an association with the SED. It is the design of this chapter to do just that. Furthermore, it is also an interesting examination of a party in confusion: a party unable to reassemble itself after governing for thirteen years and faced with its new role in opposition. As William Paterson explained, the SPD in the 1980s was "a party which mimicked a government role; however this was their weakness - they could never truly be the government."<sup>4</sup> Similar to Schumacher's policies in the 1950s, the SPD in the 1980s was characterized as "*als ab*" (i.e., acting as though they were in government). Thus the fact that the party was in opposition and attempted to exert a government-style role in the area of foreign policy contributed to its disorientation. On one hand, there was the influence of the older members who recalled the past governance, and on the other there was the newer more idealistic members who attempted to pull the party in a new direction. For all intents and purposes, this disorientation began in the heated debate surrounding the NATO twin-track decision and increased as the party had to deal with its new role in the Federal Republic.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Twin-track Decision**

During the decade of *détente*, the military balance at the intercontinental and European level shifted decisively in the Soviet Union's favor. Despite the fact that all of the NATO governments were attempting to make this development known to the public, this bad news could not be easily reconciled with the assumptions of *détente* and *Ostpolitik*. Hence, advocates of these policies, such as Brandt and Bahr, remained silent or rationalized it away. To their left, the younger politicians and intellectuals who were important in the mobilization against the NATO deployments were

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<sup>4</sup>Discussion with William E. Paterson, Edinburgh, 9 March 1995.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

even more emphatic in denying the reality or severity of the increased Soviet threat.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in his speech to the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London in 1977, Helmut Schmidt called attention to a growing imbalance between the capabilities of NATO and the Warsaw Pact in medium-range nuclear systems and suggested steps to counter this disparity. This suggestion was taken up by NATO and thus in 1979 NATO adopted the so-called "twin-track" resolution. This envisioned negotiation with the Soviet Union to persuade them to withdraw their SS-20 missiles from Eastern Europe. When the Soviet Union did not respond to NATO's request, NATO prepared to deploy intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western Europe (which it finally did in the summer of 1983). Yet, it was during the years between 1979 to 1983 that the security debate within the SPD heated up.

At its 1979 party congress in Berlin, the SPD backed a resolution that supported the twin-track decision, which it described primarily as a contribution to arms control and *détente*, and which would lead to negotiations making any deployments unnecessary. Yet, only four years later in Cologne in November 1983 at a special party meeting, the party overwhelmingly rejected support of deployment. Only Helmut Schmidt, his former defense minister Hans Apel, and other long-time close associates of the former Chancellor voted in favor of deployments, while Willy Brandt voted with and spoke for the sentiment of the overwhelming majority in the SPD against deployments.<sup>7</sup> As William E. Paterson states, "[a]t the special party conference on 18-19 November 1983 in Cologne the delegates voted overwhelmingly to reject the deployment of the new missiles in the Federal Republic. The isolation of Helmut Schmidt by then on this issue became brutally apparent. Despite what many considered to be his finest speech, his arguments in favor of deployment were rejected by 400 votes to 14."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 199.

<sup>7</sup>Karl Kaiser, "Prioritäten sozialdemokratischer Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik," in Jürgen Maruhn and Manfred Wilke, eds, *Wohin treibt die SPD?: Wende oder Kontinuität sozialdemokratischer Sicherheitspolitik*, 1984, pp. 9-27.

<sup>8</sup>William E. Paterson, "Foreign and Security Policy," *Developments in West German Politics*, 1989, p. 196.

Moreover, the German Democratic Republic, under pressure from the Soviet Union, attempted to influence the West German decision-making process by supporting the peace movement's activities and by threatening a breakdown of relations with West Germany if a "palisade of missiles" were to be erected in West Europe. "In the name of the German people" the East German leadership appealed to the shared responsibility of "all Germans" to maintain peace in Europe, which was allegedly threatened by the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) deployment.<sup>9</sup>

The issue of Cruise and Pershing missiles raised fundamental questions of defense and security policy - NATO strategy in Central Europe, West Germany's role in NATO, relations between Bonn and Washington, the Federal Republic's own military strategy and organization. These questions were not resolved by the near-unanimous vote of the Cologne Congress of 1983 to reject the deployment of missiles. The Essen Congress, six months later in May 1984, renewed the SPD's commitment to NATO and rejected a resolution calling for a freeze in defense spending. But the Executive's resolution on defense and security was essentially an uneasy compromise, a series of broad statements which proved difficult to translate into a firm security program commanding consensus support in the party. It called for a new strategy for NATO, based on a "security partnership" between the power blocs, in order to build a new European peace order in which the power blocs could be "overcome." It also called for the restructuring of the *Bundeswehr* along overtly defensive lines. The Executive's resolution charged the party's Security Policy Commission with the task of formulating these principles into a concrete program.<sup>10</sup> This was the beginning of the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*.

One of the reasons that the events of 1979 and the debates that followed were so significant was that they reopened issues involving the basic problems of West German foreign and security policy that were assumed to have been resolved within the context of the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community. They also introduced a new set of political values into the arena of West German politics. The renewed interest in "defensive defense" and neutralism was, in part,

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<sup>9</sup>See letter to Helmut Kohl by Erich Honecker on 5 October 1983 in Bundesministerium für Innerdeutsche Beziehungen (ed.), *Innerdeutsche Beziehungen. Die Entwicklung der Beziehungen zwischen der BRD und der DDR 1980-1986. Eine Dokumentation*, p. 154.

<sup>10</sup>*Protokoll: SPD Parteitag, Essen, 17-21 Mai, 1984*, pp.744-777, noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 340.



simply one manifestation of the renewed debate over security policy. It was also, in part, a product of new political values.<sup>11</sup>

These new political values are best summed up in a critical article by Heinrich August Winkler in *Atlantic Quarterly* when he states:

My thesis is as follows: the most important reason for the change in the SPD's foreign and security policy lies in uncertainties about the status of the national question and, in consequence of this, about the relationship between German interests and those of the Alliance. The SPD has a subjective need to make up for years of lost time on the national question. The fact that the question of human rights and the European dimension have increasingly been pushed into the background in the Social Democratic concept of *détente* is not unconnected with this. ... There is the deep longing for a "pure" social democratic policy freed of all pressures to compromise - a tendency which in the case of younger party members, especially those of the "generation of '68," is often fed by Marxist theory.<sup>12</sup>

Diane Rosolowsky stated that there were three primary causes for neutralism in the Federal Republic: the division of Germany; the problem of security for the Federal Republic; and changing political consciousness and political values. These were the primary problems of German politics in the 1980s. They contributed to the persistence and apparent increase in neutralism and they were interrelated synergistically. This synergism increased the neutralist tendencies in West German politics.<sup>13</sup>

## Defense Policy

In 1983, neutralism in the Federal Republic became a subject of frequent reference. The publication of Oskar Lafontaine's *Angst vor den Freunden*,<sup>14</sup> which called for the Federal Republic's withdrawal from NATO's integrated command, focused attention on the anti-nuclear wing of the SPD. This position

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<sup>11</sup>Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 136.

<sup>12</sup>Heinrich August Winkler, "The German Social Democratic Party and Defence," in *Atlantic Quarterly*, no.2 (Summer) 1984, p. 157.

<sup>13</sup>Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 136.

<sup>14</sup>Oskar Lafontaine, *Angst vor den Freunden: Die Atomwaffen-Strategie der Supermächte zerstört die Bündnisse*, 1983.

was nick-named *Lafontainization* by the press. Winkler explains, "Oskar Lafontaine, Mayor of Saarbrücken, SPD Chairman in Saarland and member of his party's federal committee, is currently receiving much applause, as well as moderate opposition, for his demand that the Federal Republic should leave ... NATO. There is no bridge between the positions of Schmidt and Lafontaine, but the SPD appears to be crossing it. This is what political commentators mean by *Lafontainization*."<sup>15</sup> The issues raised in the heat of the debate over the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in the Federal Republic became focal points for a renewed security debate in the SPD. As Diane Rosolowsky stated, 1979 may have been a watershed year for West German politics; much the way 1968 was for American politics. In both cases, events forced a reconsideration of basic assumptions.<sup>16</sup>

In 1983, a report of a party working group on "new strategies" chaired by Egon Bahr demonstrated how extensively some of the ideas carried on "the long march through the institutions" had found a home in the major opposition party. The report defended *détente* and *Sicherheitspartnerschaft*, and pledged that the SPD would attempt to extend security partnership between East and West with the hope of "replacing the strategy of deterrence." It reaffirmed West German membership in NATO and insisted that the highest goal of the Federal Republic was prevention of war. The report then raised questions about the blurring of distinctions between war prevention and war-fighting, questions emerging from improvements in the accuracy of nuclear weapons delivery systems. The stability and legitimacy of deterrence strategies had been questioned as a result of the continuing arms race. Bahr was concerned that, in his view, both nuclear world powers-especially the USA-believed it possible to control a nuclear war so that it could be limited to Europe."<sup>17</sup>

Rosolowsky stated that there was paradoxically an inverse relationship between the Federal Republic's security options and its relationship with the GDR. Both the GDR and the Soviet Union had used this relationship to try to influence the

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<sup>15</sup>See Heinrich August Winkler, "The German Social Democratic Party and Defence," in *Atlantic Quarterly*, no.2 (Summer) 1984, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup>Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe 'Neue Strategien' beim SPD-Parteivorstand vom Juli 1983," in Hans-Gunter Brauch, (ed.), *Sicherheitspolitik am Ende?*, 1984, p. 285.

Federal Republic's security policy. During the deployment debates in 1983 the Soviet Union tried to link continued good relations between the two German states to a West German rejection of the deployment.<sup>18</sup>

The peace movement and its intellectuals were defeated both by the common sense of the West German electorate and the almost unbelievable rigidity and tactical inflexibility of the Soviet Union during the INF negotiations. But it succeeded in breaking the political consensus on security policy within the West German political élite as well as raising the political cost of defense decision-making in West Germany. These were neither small nor insignificant accomplishments.<sup>19</sup>

Soon after the collapse of the Social-Liberal coalition, Brandt set the tone of SPD opposition by declaring that the party would not launch an all-out assault on the Kohl government. It was necessary to differentiate the opposition from the government - demonstrating that the SPD was not merely a "parliamentary reserve army" - but without adopting an "irresponsible" adversary position. While the party was extremely active in drafting *Bundestag* bills and conducting concerted campaigns on particular issues, it remained almost without exception within the accepted framework of parliamentary opposition and "differed from the government's policies in nuances only."<sup>20</sup> Only rarely did the party identify itself with extra-parliamentary action. Its involvement with the peace movement was one exception. In this important exception, strong feelings within the party and a desire to outflank the Greens for electoral purposes overcame the SPD's traditional reluctance to involve itself in a movement of which it was not in full control.<sup>21</sup> Until the fall of 1982, Helmut Schmidt could serve as a brake on these tendencies in his own party. After his Free Democratic coalition partners broke away from his governing coalition and he fell from power, Schmidt lost the ability to restrain the neo-neutralist current. Freed completely from responsibility for governing, the

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<sup>18</sup>Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 136-137.

<sup>19</sup>Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 200.

<sup>20</sup>See William E. Paterson and Douglas Webber, "The Federal Republic of Germany: The Re-emergent Opposition"; Conference Paper, Policy Studies Institute, London, 15-16 November, 1985, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup>For a review of the SPD's attitude in relation to the Green Party see Peter H. Merkl, "The SPD after Brandt: Problems of Integration in a Changing Urban Society," *West European Politics*, January 1988, pp. 44-46; For an in-depth study into the Green Party see Elim Papadakis, *The Green Movement in West Germany*, 1984.

party became even more explicit in its enthusiasm for "alternative" security policies and "new strategies."<sup>22</sup>

### **The SPD in Opposition**

In the summer of 1982 the FDP crossed the floor of the *Bundestag* and joined the CDU and installed Helmut Kohl as the new Chancellor with a center-right coalition. Furthermore, the year 1982 brought to a close the post-Godesberg era for the SPD. For economic reasons, West Germany no longer had the ability to isolate itself from the rest of the world. Schmidt's *Modell Deutschland* had been achieved through the introduction of monetary caution and pay discipline. The international recession occurring at the time forced the SPD to shift its policy of full employment to that of concentrating on entrepreneurial vitality. Such a shift in economic policy caused widespread discontent in the party and consequently created a deep division within the labor movement. This "growth management" conception of social democracy also came under fire from the new left post-materialists.<sup>23</sup> The SPD had to face a number of major concerns, among them were: defining the relationship between the state and market; harmonizing the values of industrialization and post-industrialism; establishing a balance between social solidarity and individualism; and combining peace and *détente* with defense and security. Consequently, the SPD was faced with a crisis of identity. Moreover, with the more central orientation, the SPD found it difficult to counter the leftward attraction of the emerging Green party.<sup>24</sup>

Stephen Padgett has stated that the intensity of the trauma inflicted by the "crisis of opposition" depended on a number of factors. First, the circumstances of the government's demise, the scale of the 1983 electoral defeat and the prospects for the party's return to power. Secondly, the extent of the "credibility gap" between basic values and economic and social realities. Thirdly, the political cohesion of the party, which may have been eroded during the period of government office.

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<sup>22</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe 'Neue Strategien' beim SPD-Parteivorstand vom Juli 1983," in Hans-Gunter Brauch, (ed.), *Sicherheitspolitik am Ende?*, 1984, p. 285.

<sup>23</sup>See Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*, 1993, pp. 46-58.

<sup>24</sup>Siegfried Heimann, "Die Sozialdemokratie: Forschungsstand und offene Fragen," Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Stöss (eds.), *Stand und Perspektiven der Parteienforschung in Deutschland*, 1993, p. 163-164.



Fourthly, the organizational structure of the party, and the capacity of its top leadership to "manage" change. Finally, external forces in the institutional and cultural environment of party politics.<sup>25</sup>

At the root of the problems facing the SPD in 1982-83 was the erosion in the 1970s of "the social democratic paradigm."<sup>26</sup> The conception of social democracy at which the West European parties arrived in the post-war era was based on the acceptance of a capitalist market economy, managed on Keynesian lines to produce a stable and high level of employment, high wages and price stability. The surplus generated by a performance economy was to be redistributed progressively through welfare programs and taxation. The social democratic paradigm came under increasingly sharp attack from both right and left.<sup>27</sup> In defense and security policy, social democratic formulas were undermined. As mentioned earlier, in an era of East-West confrontation, the promotion of *détente* and disarmament appeared to many Social Democrats to be no longer compatible with a commitment to the Atlantic Alliance.

In program and policy, the old formulas of the Godesberg Program of 1959 no longer commanded confidence either in the electorate or in the party.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the medium-term program *Orientierungsrahmen 85* had been little more than an exercise in compromise between party factions.<sup>29</sup> Shortly after the break-up of the Social-Liberal coalition a joint meeting of top party organs in November 1982 had set out a 12-point policy document,<sup>30</sup> and in its essentials this was the program on which the party had fought the 1983 election. It contributed little to the formation of a new party identity or to setting a long-term course for the SPD. Reflecting the policy disorientation of the party in the last years of the coalition, it contained no

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<sup>25</sup>Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 333-334.

<sup>26</sup>See William E. Paterson, "Introduction" to William E. Paterson and Alistair Thomas, *The Future of Social Democracy: Problems and Prospects of Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe*, 1986.

<sup>27</sup>See *Frankfurter Rundschau*, "Nullwachstum 1981- Ende eines Fetischs oder soziale Katastrophe," 6 January 1981.

<sup>28</sup>See Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics: The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei*, 1991, pp. 66-75.

<sup>29</sup>Siegfried Heimann, "Die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands" in Richard Stöss (ed.), *Parteien-handbuch; Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschlands 1945-1980*, Band II, 1984, pp.2081-5.

<sup>30</sup>*SPD Jahrbuch*, 1981-83 (Bonn, 1984), pp.613-614.

coherent program for economic renewal, and its defense and security policies were uncertain and ambiguous. It left the question of the style of SPD opposition to the Kohl government unanswered, and the party's position in relation to the Greens was also left open. This lack of a coherent policy is best analyzed as the SPD's interim response to the immediate reaction to the FDP's move to the CDU and its new opposition status.

Furthermore, the SPD's capacity for mass integration had been seriously weakened. The characteristics of a *Volkspartei* (people's party) was successfully captured by the CDU.<sup>31</sup> Thirteen years in power had exhausted the ability of the SPD leadership to manage the conflict between the exercise of government responsibility and the maintenance of solidarity among key support groups. Industrial workers and the critical youth of the post-materialist generation had become marginalized in the party. Moreover, there was a conflict of expectations and aspirations between the two social groups, expressed in the conflict between economy and ecology.<sup>32</sup>

The exercise in programmatic renewal was undertaken in harmony with the traditions of the party's recent past. The SPD reasserted its identity as a *Volkspartei* of wage- and salary-earners, a progressive party of pragmatic reform. While there was no fundamental reorientation of policy, the party embarked upon a programmatic reappraisal from which certain themes - peace and *détente*, *Arbeit und Umwelt* (employment and environment) - emerged with added force. However, an attempt to regain the intellectual leadership which it had lost in the previous decade failed.

Neither a renewal of the Social-Liberal coalition with the Free Democrats, nor a Grand Coalition with the CDU/CSU was a realistic proposition for the foreseeable future.<sup>33</sup> An alliance of Social Democrats and Greens, based on a "new majority left of the center" had its attractions for some, including Brandt. However, the idea

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<sup>31</sup>See Peter H. Merkl, "The SPD after Brandt: Problems of Integration in a Changing Urban Society, *West European Politics*, January 1988, pp. 40-41.

<sup>32</sup>Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 336.

<sup>33</sup>See William E. Paterson, "Introduction" to William E. Paterson and Alistair Thomas, *The Future of Social Democracy: Problems and Prospects of Social Democratic Parties in Western Europe*, 1986.

aroused fierce opposition on the right of the party, and was fraught with difficulties for the SPD. The new party was politically volatile and unpredictable. Although the SPD was moving towards the Greens on certain issues - defense and the environment - there were fundamental policy differences between the two parties. Moreover, association with the Greens threatened to damage the SPD's attempt to forge a new social coalition of voters around skilled workers and the technical intelligentsia. As the CDU began to make political capital out of speculation over a Red and Green alliance, SPD leaders became more forthright in distancing themselves from the new party. This reaction did not, however, prevent the SPD from contemplating or even concluding alliances with the Greens in the *Länder*. Klaus von Donhanyi and Holger Börner both entered negotiations aimed at securing Green Party support for minority SPD governments in Hamburg and Hessen.<sup>34</sup>

In the area of economic policy, the SPD made substantial progress after entering opposition. It formulated a strategy for reconciling *Arbeit und Umwelt*, and for coming to terms with the environmental limits to growth. Both major parties had for some time been attempting to reconcile economic growth and environmental protection in a formula for "qualitative growth," but for the SPD the task was the more urgent since the question had a bearing on the party's identity and its long-term future. Those on the trade union wing who saw the SPD as a party of and for industrial society, regarded environmentalism as alien to social democratic traditions and purposes. Others wished to see the SPD responding to the new challenges of ecology and looking for political openings to the Greens.

The concept of "qualitative growth" was initially developed in the early 1980s by the SPD economist H.J. Krupp of the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin.<sup>35</sup> Its attraction for the SPD lay in the fact that it was entirely compatible with the party's belief in state intervention in the market economy for the attainment of social goals. In the form in which the concept was presented, it involved the stimulation of research and the direction of investment into a new technology of environmental protection. The "ecological modernization of the

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<sup>34</sup>See Diane L. Parness, *The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics: The Dilemma of the German Volkspartei*, 1991, pp. 135-166.

<sup>35</sup>*Frankfurter Rundschau*, "Nullwachstum 1981- Ende eines Fetisches oder soziale Katastrophe," 6 January 1981 p. 339.

economy" would simultaneously create a dynamic growth sector with an export and job creation potential, and serve social and environmental needs.<sup>36</sup> Environmental protection was thus coupled with economic performance, even in environmentally hazardous industries such as chemicals.<sup>37</sup>

After the general election of March 1983, the question of the party's identity and its electoral strategy assumed a new prominence. The leadership was not slow to respond. The party Executive immediately commissioned a comprehensive study of the electorate, which arrived at party headquarters in summer 1984. Entitled "Planning Data for a Majority SPD," the study applied a new methodology to the analysis of party identification and voting behavior. It sought to identify blocs of sympathetic voters by social milieu, lifestyle and psychological type as well as by more traditional categories of occupational and socio-economic status. The objective behind the study was to devise a new electoral strategy in which conflicts of interest could be minimized, and about which a new social coalition of voters could be mobilized. From early in 1984, Willy Brandt and Peter Glotz, the leading advocates of integration, took every opportunity to distance themselves and the SPD from the Greens,<sup>38</sup> to attack the credibility of the Green Party and to affirm the SPD's role as an opinion leader rather than the follower of post-materialist ideas.<sup>39</sup> At the Essen congress in May, Brandt joined party leaders on the center-right in emphasizing the SPD's *Volkspartei* character. Peter Glotz was quite specific in identifying the technical intelligentsia - skilled workers and middle to higher grade white-collar workers - as key groups in a social coalition of voting blocs which he saw as the foundation of the party's future.<sup>40</sup>

## The New Leadership

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<sup>36</sup>See "Die Wirtschaft ökologisch und sozial erneuern", Entwurf der Kommission Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik beim Parteivorstand der SPD, *Politik: Informationsdienst der SPD*, no. 10, November 1985, as noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 339.

<sup>37</sup>Volker Hauff, Speech before IG Chemical of Hesse, "Technik als Hilfe der Menschen", *Tagesdienst: Informationen der Sozialdemokratischen Bundestagsfraktion*, 4 October 1985, noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 339.

<sup>38</sup>*Die Welt*, 27 February 1984.

<sup>39</sup>See, for instance, Peter Glotz, "Spiegel Gespräch" *Der Spiegel*, 2 April 1984, p. 34.

<sup>40</sup>Peter Glotz, "Der Tanker ist kein Surfbrett - zur Taktik der SPD", in Wolfram Bickerich (ed.), *SPD und Grüne: Das neue Bündnis?* Hamburg, 1985, p. 178.



In the security field the SPD found its oppositional calling and its new leadership exemplified its new commitment towards staking "everything on negotiating away nuclear weapons."<sup>41</sup> For the SPD, the trauma of opposition was particularly acute. The fall of the Social-Liberal Coalition was the culmination of a protracted crisis in relations between the two coalition parties, and in relations between the government and the SPD itself. Almost immediately, the SPD Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, announced his withdrawal from front-rank party life. The trauma of these events was compounded by the widespread belief that in the later years in government, the party's identity had suffered and its sense of purpose had been dissipated. It had lost the intellectual command which it had wrested from the Union parties in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and its basic values, programs and policies had lost their relevance. The top party leadership had been depleted, and some of those who remained no longer represented the mood of the party. A new party, to the left of the SPD, had made serious incursions into its electorate. There was a general feeling in the party that the SPD would not return to government until it had undertaken a comprehensive, and probably lengthy exercise in regeneration, reappraisal and renewal.<sup>42</sup>

Without Schmidt and Wehner, the party's top leadership had a lightweight appearance.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, some of Schmidt's close associates (for instance Apel, Matthöfer, Wischnewski, Lahnstein), had been too closely linked with the Chancellor and his policies to be confident of commanding full authority in the party. Hans-Jochen Vogel's nomination as Chancellor candidate was quick and clean. He was a reconciler, but he was not an inspirational leader. Moreover, in the *Länder* and municipalities, the erosion of the SPD's government power bases and the strains of internal party conflict had depleted the party's middle-order leadership. In 1981 alone Hans-Ulrich Klose resigned as Mayor of Hamburg, Klaus Matthiesen stepped down as *Spitzenkandidat* in Schleswig-Holstein and Reinhold Zundel remained Mayor of Heidelberg but resigned from the party.

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<sup>41</sup>Speech: Willy Brandt, Landesparteitag Bremen, 22 June 1985, (SPD Parteivorstand, Pressearchiv, Ollenhauerstrasse, Bonn), noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 341.

<sup>42</sup>Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 334.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 336.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the *Länder* represented an important recruiting ground for the new generation of party leaders.<sup>44</sup> Shortly after the fall of Schmidt's government, an informal gathering of the SPD's elder statesmen and "Young Turks" discussed the idea of the renewal of the party leadership "from the provinces." The Brandt "grandchildren" (*Enkel*) idea arose during these discussions.<sup>45</sup> The vacuum caused by the retirement of the "old guard" was to be filled by younger men and women on the left and center-left of the party, cast in Brandt's mold of pragmatic idealism and generally drawn from the intermediate levels of party leadership in the *Länder*. Chief of these was Oskar Lafontaine, whose fortunes were boosted by his *Landtag* election victory in the Saarland in 1985. Figurehead of the party's left-wing, his radicalism had been held in check somewhat by his arduous responsibilities as Minister-President in a state where the public debt was double the size of the annual budget. Gerhard Schröder and Björn Engholm, *Spitzenkandidaten* in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein respectively, were also associated with the Brandt circle. Schröder's rise was particularly rapid. He shocked the party establishment in Lower Saxony by promoting himself successfully as candidate for Minister-President in the 1986 *Landtag* election, and in August the same year, at Nürnberg, he was elected to the Federal Party Executive. Another of Brandt's protégés elected to the Executive was Heidi Wieczorek-Zeul.<sup>46</sup> *Jusos* leader in the 1970s and a member of the European Parliament since 1979, she was a leading figure in the campaign to improve the representation of women in the SPD's top leadership ranks.

### "Critical" Peace Research

The political movement within the SPD attempting to prevent implementation of NATO's 1979 twin-track decision was associated with the "peace movement" which arose surrounding fears that the superpowers were returning to their aggressive Cold-War positions. The peace movement suggested that there was a greater danger of war which, in the nuclear-age, was likely to be cataclysmic and the particular aims of this movement corresponded to a general interest in peace.

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<sup>44</sup>For an in-depth study of this phenomenon see also Klaus von Beyme, *The Political System of the Federal Republic of Germany*, 1983, pp. 104-116.

<sup>45</sup>See *Der Spiegel*, 23 June 1986; for a review of this generational issue see Peter H. Merkl, "The SPD after Brandt: Problems of Integration in a Changing Urban Society, *West European Politics*, January 1988, pp. 49.

<sup>46</sup>*Der Spiegel*, 8 September 1986.

Furthermore, adherents of this movement argued that they were more interested in peace than their fellow citizens or the politicians whose professional activities focused on the issue. The members of the peace movements in Western Europe were drawn almost exclusively from one group: young, university educated, left-leaning intellectuals and people who had passed through West German universities in the 1960s and after.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, as mentioned in the first chapter, when Helmut Schmidt became Chancellor, Brandt remained head of the party. The party of Schmidt was pragmatic, skeptical of ideology, and preoccupied with governance, while the party of Brandt's was utopian, idealistic, and sympathetic to nurturing the "democratic socialist" tradition. While Schmidt attended to affairs of state, Brandt and his foreign policy adviser, Egon Bahr, attended to affairs of the party through its newspapers, journals, local initiatives, and newer, university-educated, middle-class membership. With his considerable moral authority within the SPD, Brandt hoped to bring the new left into the party and utilize its power. Peace research, or "critical peace research," demonstrated this confluence of interests between the "new left" and Social Democratic "grandfathers," like Brandt. The political impact of peace research concentrated on the separation of governance and mandate, i.e., Schmidt and Brandt, in the years preceding the INF crisis.<sup>48</sup> It can be argued that Brandt's party brought down Schmidt's government in 1982.

In pre-1945 Europe, anti-capitalism drew many of Europe's most distinguished intellectuals to the right. Since 1945, Nazism and fascism have been utterly discredited among intellectuals, so that when the anti-capitalism of the intelligentsia did revive in the 1960s, it did so exclusively on the left. There were two paths of influence through which this intelligentsia exerted influence on foreign and defense policy. The first passed through public opinion, while the second passed through the Social Democratic Party and, less importantly, through the Greens. Because of the general public's "low salience" of security policy

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<sup>47</sup>Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 172.

<sup>48</sup>See Wilhelm Hennis, "Parteienstruktur und Regierbarkeit," in Wilhelm Hennis et al., *Regierbarkeit*, pp. 150-195.

coupled with the educated public's "high salience," committed and articulate minorities were able to exert an influence out of proportion to their numbers.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, by the late 1970s, defense decisions, formerly of interest to a small foreign policy and strategic élite, became subject to scrutiny by a much broader, generally critical public. By 1979, it was no longer possible for Helmut Schmidt, then at the height of his power and prestige, to get the support of his party for NATO's 1979 modernization decision. The second or negotiating track of the 1979 decision opened up the Schmidt government to unprecedented public pressures, pressures that came partly from the neo-neutralist and anti-defense intellectuals who had been supported and subsidized in peace research institutes in the 1970s.<sup>50</sup>

In testimony to the West German parliament, K. Peter Stratmann, one of West Germany's foremost strategic thinkers, insisted that the intellectuals, not the facts of world politics, were to blame for the climate of "mass hysteria" that gripped much of the intellectual and political élite from 1979 to 1983 in West Germany.<sup>51</sup> These loud noises, with some long-suppressed overtones, fell on receptive ears among neighbors to the East and to the West, and of course in the United States and the Soviet Union as well.<sup>52</sup> Stratmann's point was that the anti-missile campaign was not an expression of naive Angst. Rather, it rested on a set of ideas, which in turn presupposed the larger conceptual framework. The "peace movement" was caused partly by the translation of the theory of peace research into practice.

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<sup>49</sup>See Gabriel Almond, "Public Opinion and National Security Policy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 2 (Summer 1956), pp. 371-378.

<sup>50</sup>Within a year of NATO's dual-track decision, the basic arguments of the anti-missile campaign had been elaborated and diffused throughout the mainstream media and the alternative press. Peace research institutes were centers for the campaign directed against the decision. From 1980 to 1983, associates of the *Hessische Stiftung für Friedens und Konfliktforschung* alone wrote over 170 essays, research reports, longer studies, and short comments for a periodical report dealing with current political issues. See Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 193.

<sup>51</sup>K. Peter Stratmann, "Vorlage zur öffentlichen Anhörung im Verteidigungsausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages zum Thema 'Alternativen Strategien am November 28, 1983,'" unpublished manuscript, pp. 16-18, noted in Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 177-178.

<sup>52</sup>See Eberhard Schulz and Peter Danylow, *Bewegung in der deutschen Frage? Die ausländischen Besorgnisse über die Entwicklung in den beiden deutschen Staaten*, DGAP Arbeitspapier zur Internationalen Politik, no. 33, 1985.



After Brandt's election in 1969, there was a confluence of the new left's long march through the institutions and Brandt's desire to "dare more democracy." The result was the creation of "peace research institutes" supporting several hundred "counter-experts," all largely financed by the state and national governments. The center of the peace research network was the German Society for Peace and Conflict Research, or DGFK (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*), located in Bonn.<sup>53</sup> Institutes were also established in Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Starnberg, and Heidelberg. The process by which these institutes were established was a fascinating example of politicized research and state subsidies for the intellectual left.<sup>54</sup>

As Karl-Heinz Koppe, the director of the DGFK, put it, the task of the DGFK was to link theory and practice by developing ways in which "the interest of public opinion in the problem of peace could be awakened."<sup>55</sup> Both the DGFK in Bonn and the regional peace research institutes went to great efforts to make their work available to a broader public through lectures, newspaper articles, publications by the institutes made available to schools and universities, as well as by fostering contacts with peace researchers in other countries and with the United Nations.

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<sup>53</sup>In 1971, Karl Kaiser, a distinguished member of the West German foreign policy elite, was elected chair of the board of trustees of the newly formed DGFK. Then, in 1980, he left the DGFK because it had become a vehicle of "critical" peace research and had failed to follow the transitional, more reformist strategy he had earlier advocated in 1970. Kaiser's resignation and the domination of state-supported peace research by the intellectual left reflected the growing divisions that existed between the Schmidt and Brandt wings of the Social Democratic Party. See Karl Kaiser, *Friedensforschung in der Bundesrepublik: Studie im Auftrag der Stiftung Volkswagenwerk*, 1970.

<sup>54</sup>The key to the institutionalization of peace research was the enduring power of Willy Brandt. In 1970, Brandt, along with Gustav Heinemann, then President of the Federal Republic, supported the creation of peace research institutes. In 1970, the *Hessische Stiftung für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* (The Foundation for Peace and Conflict Research of the State of Hesse, HSFK) in Frankfurt was established, as was the *Max Planck Institut zur Erforschung der Lebensbedingungen der wissenschaftlich-technischen Welt* (Max Planck Institute for Research on Living Conditions in a Scientific-Technical World) in Starnberg. One year later the private *Berghof Stiftung für Konfliktforschung* (Berghof Foundation for Conflict Research) began in Munich as did the *Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg* (Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg, IFSH). See Karl-Heinz Koppe, "Zur Entwicklung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (DGFK) und der Friedensforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *DGFK Jahrbuch 1979/1980*, p. 883.

<sup>55</sup>Karl-Heinz Koppe, "Zur Entwicklung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung (DGFK) und der Friedensforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in *DGFK Jahrbuch 1979/1980*, p. 893.

The West German political scientist Hans-Joachim Arndt stressed that peace research lay firmly in the tradition of social science positivism of a liberal and left-wing bent.<sup>56</sup> As such, it was a leftist variant of the legalistic-internationalist vision that had so influenced the national style of the foreign policy of the Federal Republic.<sup>57</sup> For West German neo-conservatives such as Helmut Schelsky and Frederick Tenbruck, peace research represented an ideological tool in the drive for political power by the intellectuals as well as a "redemptive faith" (*Heilsglaube*). Where utopian hopes for a heaven on earth of eternal peace had, in pre-modern societies, been expressed through religious millenarianism, peace research articulated these same impulses in the secular language of social science. Social science and social scientists would now be the agents of a complete transformation of thought and society in accordance with the theoretical knowledge offered by a still youthful science of peace.<sup>58</sup>

Peace research in West Germany had an explicit and proudly proclaimed desire to unite theory and practice, to be more than a "merely" academic exercise. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian peace researcher whose work became the subject of extensive discussion among West German peace researchers, wrote in the late 1960s that peace research without political action was pointless. The point was to "make propaganda" among intellectuals, to influence foreign policy élites and public opinion, and above all to "break the monopoly of governments on the making of foreign policy."<sup>59</sup> Galtung's plea to break government's "monopoly" on foreign policy formulation made explicit an enduring dimension of peace research, namely that it was part of a drive for power and influence by intellectuals.<sup>60</sup> Its focus was on psychology, sociology, and economics, and its aim was to eliminate war by analyzing how to eliminate the causes of war. These causes were said to lie

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<sup>56</sup>Hans Joachim Arndt, *Die Staatliche geforderte Friedens- und Konfliktforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1970 bis 1979*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>57</sup>See Hans Peter Schwarz, *Die Gezähmten Deutschen: Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit*, 1985.

<sup>58</sup>Frederick Tenbruck, "Frieden durch Friedensforschung," in Klaus Hornung, (ed.), *Frieden ohne Utopie*, 1983, pp. 91-112, noted in Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 179.

<sup>59</sup>Johann Galtung, *Strukturelle Gewalt*, 1975, pp. 44, 49, 54-55.

<sup>60</sup>In the late 1960s, Galtung gave critical peace research some of its key words: "negative" vs. "positive peace," "structural violence" and "counter-violence." The absence of war and violence between states was, he wrote, merely a "negative peace." Furthermore, the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union was seen as a form of "structural violence." See op. cit., p. 33.

above all in social and economic injustice, misperceptions, and lack of sufficient international communication.<sup>61</sup> Peace research challenged the discipline of international relations for paying too much attention to military and diplomatic history while neglecting what it argued were the actual origins of war.

In 1969, Dieter Senghaas, a West German political scientist, published *Abschreckung und Frieden: Studien zur organisierter Friedlosigkeit* (Deterrence and Peace: Studies of Organized Peacelessness). Senghaas offered a radical analysis of East-West relations, deterrence theory, and nuclear weapons and laid the intellectual foundations for the attack on deterrence by the peace movements of the early 1980s.<sup>62</sup> Senghaas put the blame for the existence of "organized peacelessness" at the door of American theory and practice of deterrence of the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>63</sup> His analysis contains many of the themes that were to become central to the anti-missile campaign against the NATO 1979 twin-track decision.

In his opinion, the drive to restore Clausewitz to the nuclear era, evident in the American strategists of limited war, erased the distinction between deterrence and actual use of nuclear weapons. Technological improvements in speed and accuracy of weapons were driving strategists to take "war-fighting" doctrines frighteningly seriously. Deterrence theory revealed the "autistic" nature and inherent instability of the "deterrence system," its tendency to move closer to actual war-fighting doctrines. For Senghaas, the "existing system" was one of organized peacelessness that guaranteed neither peace nor security.<sup>64</sup> The overcoming of organized peacelessness in practice was the major political and scholarly task of critical peace research.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>62</sup>Senghaas took the view that nuclear weapons made nation-states obsolete and ended the Clausewitzian era of human history in which force and violence could serve any political rational purposes in international politics. His criticism of American deterrence theory was that it refused to accept the end of a Clausewitzian age and instead attempted to revive the link between political goals and military means in the nuclear era through speculations on escalation and limited war. See Dieter Senghaas, *Abschreckung und Frieden: Studien zur organisierter Friedlosigkeit*, 1981, p. 73.

<sup>63</sup>For a current review of anti-American movements in Germany see W.R. Smyser, *Deutschland gegen Amerika? Eine Bestandsaufnahme für die Zukunft*, 1992.

<sup>64</sup>Dieter Senghaas, *Abschreckung und Frieden: Studien zur organisierter Friedlosigkeit*, 1981, p. 288.



Peace research was identified from the outset with the SPD and especially with the Brandt wing of the party. The conservative opposition in the West German parliament voted against funding the program, which it viewed as self-righteously utopian, controlled by the radical left, bereft of enduring scholarly value, and essentially a political maneuver by Brandt to create a class of subsidized intellectuals to justify his policies.<sup>65</sup> In a report completed in 1980 for the Bavarian state government, the West German political scientist Hans-Joachim Arndt concluded that the DGFK and the regional peace research institutes were carrying out the agenda of critical peace research, or were heavily influenced by Marxist and leftist analyses of international politics.<sup>66</sup>

From 1980 to 1983, the anti-defense intelligentsia were mobilized in the campaign to prevent implementation of NATO's 1979 twin-track decision. The anti-missile campaign was precisely the kind of unity of science and politics, theory and practice, that peace research had been seeking to create since its beginnings. Mobilization meant diffusion of ideas to a broader public, a process that took place through state-supported radio and television and non-subsidized publishers, newspapers, and magazines. Among book publishers, Rowohlt in Hamburg and Suhrkamp in Frankfurt were most important. From 1975 to 1983, Rowohlt published about 30 books, each selling between 20,000 and 90,000 copies, with themes and perspectives influenced by critical peace research. Suhrkamp, famous for reprinting the classics of left-wing culture of the 1920s and 1930s, published 16 collections of essays written by associates of the Institute for Peace Research in Frankfurt. *Der Spiegel*, the most important weekly newsmagazine in West Germany, popularized findings by peace researchers and took the lead in presenting the case against the NATO 1979 decision.<sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Herf stated that a "transmission belt was in place along which a left-wing intellectual élite could quickly send its analyses of world politics to a receptive and largely non-cross-

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<sup>65</sup>See Gunter Gillissen, "Nicht pfuschen mit der Friedensforschung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 February 1971; and "Selbstbedienungsladen der Wissenschaftler," *Der Spiegel*, 1 June 1972.

<sup>66</sup>Hans Joachim Arndt, *Die Staatliche geforderte Friedens- und Konfliktforschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1970 bis 1979*, 1980, p. 33.

<sup>67</sup>See Rainer Steinweg, (ed.), *Die neue Friedensforschung: Analysen aus der Friedensforschung*, 1982.



pressured audience in the left-wing subculture and to political leaders in the SPD."<sup>68</sup>

Anton-Andreas Guha, security correspondent of the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, argued in numerous articles and books that no military defense of West Germany was possible. Any defensive effort would be worse than "civilian defense," or acceptance of occupation and non-violent resistance, because it would lead to the physical destruction of a geographically limited, densely populated country. In Guha's view, a society based on equality and justice was a more effective deterrent than any military strategy conceivable. Guha argued for disarmed neutralism, exit from NATO, dissolution of the Western Alliance which would serve as a catalyst for dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.<sup>69</sup>

### **SPD Policy Renewal**

The SPD set about the process of renewal in an apparent new atmosphere of harmony and accord. In a letter to members of the parliamentary party in July 1983, *Fraktion* leader Vogel observed that the party was "encouragingly united."<sup>70</sup> The party's Basic Values Commission (*Grundwertekommission*) carried out a comprehensive review of the Godesberg Program, and its deficiencies 25 years on.<sup>71</sup> Reflecting all shades of opinion from Richard Löwenthal on the right to Johanno Strasser on the left, the Commission recommended that the *Parteivorstand* should begin the draft of a new program, and a Program Commission of the Executive was duly convened in August 1984. The report of the Basic Values Commission emphasized that the Godesberg Program should not be officially overturned. The triad of fundamental principles - freedom, justice and solidarity - should be retained, but perhaps given fuller meaning. For instance, the

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<sup>68</sup>Jeffrey Herf, "War, Peace, and the Intellectuals: The West German Peace Movement," *International Security*, vol. 10, no. 4, Spring, 1986, p. 192.

<sup>69</sup>Anton-Andreas Guha, *Die Nachrüstung: Der Holocaust Europas*, 1981, p. 11.

<sup>70</sup>Letter from Vogel (as *Fraktion* leader) to members of the *Bundestag Fraktion*, 5 July 1983 (SPD Parteivorstand, Pressearchiv, Ollenhauerstrasse, Bonn), noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 337.

<sup>71</sup>See Peter H. Merkl, "The SPD after Brandt: Problems of Integration in a Changing Urban Society," *West European Politics*, January 1988, pp. 47.

report stated that "although no member ... asked to replace justice with equality, there were intensive discussions over the connection between the two values."<sup>72</sup>

Yet, the 1984 policy renewal of the SPD lacked direction. It was characterized by confusion and conflict over whether it was to supersede the Bad Godesberg program or merely to update it. The left saw this as an opportunity to remake the party's identity by constructing a Social Democratic *Weltanschauung* drawing on the best of the new left emphasis. The right of the SPD, shunning ideology, advocated a more cosmetic approach to program drafting. The cornerstone of the policy change was investment in clean and sustainable technologies and energy. The credibility of this strategy depended on support from the labor wing which had been previously hostile towards a "greening" of policy. An endorsement by the Chemical Workers Union was significant.<sup>73</sup> They also rejected NATO strategy and were antagonistic towards market capitalism, proposing also an emphasis on state intervention. This feature drew fire from the Right and caused a rift within the party. Adding to the problems of the Social Democrats was the emergence of an Old Politics-New Politics dimension.

Johannes Rau's victory in the North Rhine-Westphalia Land elections in May 1985, and his subsequent nomination as Chancellor candidate, gave the party new hope for the prospect of regaining government. Rau was personally identified with the party's manual worker constituency, and moreover, the May result showed that the SPD had tightened its hold on this electoral group.<sup>74</sup> The result of the North Rhine-Westphalia election, along with that in the Saarland, also suggested that the Greens had lost their electoral momentum. Moreover, Rau was more concerned with jobs and less concerned with the environment as many on the left within the party. The spearhead of the SPD's new integration strategy, the appeal to the broad strata of wage and salary earners and particularly to the technical intelligentsia, was evident in the speeches of the party leadership, and in policy initiatives after

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<sup>72</sup>SPD Parteivorstand, *Materialien; Godesberg Heute: Bericht der Grundwertekommission zum Godesberger Grundsatzprogramm* (Bonn, 1984), noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 337.

<sup>73</sup>Stephen Padgett and William Paterson, "The Rise and Fall of the West German Left," *New Left Review*, March 1991; footnoting an article in the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 May 1985.

<sup>74</sup>Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, EV, *Wahl in Nordrhein-Westfalen: eine Analyse der Landtagswahl am 12 Mai 1984* (Mannheim, 1985), p. 6, noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 343.

1984. While the technical intelligentsia were identified as the cornerstone of a new social coalition of support, and programmatic initiatives tailored to this constituency, the Social Democrats also projected an appeal to a wider electorate. Presenting itself as a responsible party of *détente*, peace and freedom and of a socially and environmentally responsible economy, the SPD attempted to embrace the critical youth of the post-materialist generation. These policy initiatives were at the heart of the SPD's "second phase."

The dramatic recovery of the party at the polls, culminating in the *Landtag* election successes in the spring of 1985, persuaded party planners to address a more immediate perspective for a return to power. Short-term expediency overwhelmed the longer-term project of internal party renewal. Programmatic revision was now geared to electoral purposes as policy differences were resolved in hasty and often unsatisfactory compromises. The vexed question of the party's relationship with the Green Party was simply ignored. The process of élite renewal and the regeneration of the leadership was curtailed. The collapse of Rau's campaign three months before the *Bundestag* election, and despite a "greening" of SPD policy at the Nürnberg Congress of 1986, the party was still unattractive to post-materialists. This resulted in confusion among the youth, manual working class, and the upwardly mobile. The SPD's dilemma embodied the classic tensions between representative and participatory democracy and between its desire to govern and its "Utopian" ideals.<sup>75</sup> The heavy defeat in general elections of January 1987 and the *post mortem* which immediately followed, revealed that the SPD was still a far distance from coming to terms with the crisis of opposition with which it had been grappling over the past four years.<sup>76</sup>

### Leaving Godesberg Behind

By the middle of the 1980s, the SPD had shifted its position in foreign and security affairs towards the left. This shift centered around security affairs and was guided by the thought that preserving peace was the most important task.

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<sup>75</sup>Siegfried Heimann, "Die Sozialdemokratie: Forschungsstand und offene Fragen," Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Stöss (eds.), *Stand und Perspektiven der Parteienforschung in Deutschland*, 1993, p. 162.

<sup>76</sup>Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 334.

Furthermore, the SPD was influenced by prominent members within the party who were calling for more direct authority by the FRG in dealing with security issues which affected them; i.e., Karsten Voigt, Oskar Lafontaine, and Egon Bahr.

Central to the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was a break from the Godesberg Program of 1959. This break became evident in the spring of 1986 with a policy paper written by Friedhelm Farthmann, SPD *Fraktion* leader in North Rhine-Westphalia. Farthmann's attack on the free market economy undermined the attempt of Wolfgang Roth, the party's *Bundestag* spokesman on economics, to draft a consensual economic policy program.<sup>77</sup> However, the document was generally positive in its appraisal of the market economy, and explicitly reiterated the Godesberg Program's dictum "as much competition as possible; as much planning as necessary."

However, in the first Irsee draft of the new program published in June 1986, the principle of justice was linked with that of equality. In a significant departure from the Godesberg Program it was stated that: "Justice means equal freedoms ... equality between men and women ... more equality in the distribution of income, wealth and power ... and in access to education training and culture. ... A fair distribution of work is also a basic prerequisite of justice."<sup>78</sup> This passage was a recognition that, in the constrained economic circumstances of the 1980s, the distribution of economic opportunities and rewards was a major issue. Furthermore, at the Nuremberg Congress in August 1986, Rau's advocacy of a more active role for the state in promoting entrepreneurial initiative and his promise of tax concessions for small and medium-sized businesses underlined the SPD's favorable disposition towards the private economic sector.

The division within the SPD regarding security concepts became evident in 1987 in the preparations for the special congress before the national parliamentary elections. The SPD Security Commission, under the Chairmanship of former state secretary in the Defense Ministry, Andreas von Bülow, drafted a security policy paper which advocated major reforms in NATO strategy, organization and weaponry, a more limited role for the Federal Republic in the Alliance, and a

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<sup>77</sup>Entwurf für ein neues Grundsatzprogramm der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, (Irsee, June 1986), see pp. 50-61.

<sup>78</sup>Nürnberger Nachrichten, 12 May 1986.



radical restructuring of the *Bundeswehr*.<sup>79</sup> The draft laid out a security strategy in many ways contradictory to the current strategy of NATO. It called for the superpowers to convert their strategies to a defensive posture; the *Bundeswehr* to be cut by one-third; a merger of active and reserve forces; and the FRG's forward defense to consist of blocking light infantry which would be incapable of attack.<sup>80</sup>

The so-called "Bülow paper" had a long-term goal that would lead to Soviet and US troops being withdrawn from Central Europe by the year 2000 with only a small representation of US troops remaining to defend West Germany from bunkers and woodland hideouts. The paper was ardently attacked by the government coalition, media, and the remaining right wing members of the SPD.

After the right wing SPD members, led by former Mayor of Berlin Dietrich Stobbe, walked out of a party congress, a most radical paper was proposed. The Berlin draft resolution called for numerous facets of the "Europeanization of Europe"; a European cultural identity; a "European policy made in Europe" and not as a result of "global great power policy"; West German self-assertion while retaining its ties to the West; and significant reductions of the jurisdiction of the three Western occupying powers in West Berlin. The draft referred to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as the equivalent of US policy in Nicaragua. It called for all but *de jure* recognition of East Germany. And finally, the draft proclaimed that capitalism led to armaments and the military domination of sources of raw materials and export markets.

A Bremen draft resolution continued where the Berlin resolution had left off. The draft, with explicit influences from modern Marxist theory, declared that SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative)<sup>81</sup> was indeed intended to pressure the Soviet Union and Western Europe so that the former would become a victim of US technological superiority and the latter a technological vassal of the US. Furthermore, SDI, it was argued, was intended to stimulate the US economy. However, under the leadership of Alfons Pawelczyk, Deputy Mayor of Berlin, a

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<sup>79</sup>*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 September 1985.

<sup>80</sup>Karsten Voigt expressed that fact that it was his idea in 1984 to "rethink all things" even forward defense in order to prompt change within the Soviet Union on security issues. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>81</sup>For a review of Kohl's government position regarding SDI see William E. Paterson, "Foreign and Security Policy," *Developments in West German Politics*, 1989, p. 203-204, 207.

modified draft resolution was prepared for the SPD party congress. The new draft was much more muted and cautious in its advocacy of NATO reform, balancing the previous document's emphasis on European security interests with a firm commitment to the United States and "the basic value system" which it represented. Moreover, the demand for the restructuring of the *Bundeswehr* was omitted.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, it contained the nucleus of the ideas of Bahr and "common security" and although the commitment to NATO was renewed, the new statement reiterated the demand contained in the Bülow document for parity in the Alliance between European and American interests. Prescriptions for the restructuring of the Western Alliance were framed in terms of the broad principles set out at Essen two years earlier. The document merely "appealed" to the United States to "stop delivery of further Cruise and Pershing missiles and to remove those already deployed."<sup>83</sup> There was no suggestion that a future SPD government would act unilaterally or precipitately in relation to NATO or the missiles. On the question of the *Bundeswehr*, an overwhelmingly positive appraisal was followed by a statement of principles for its long-term development which was much less radical than that contained in the initial Bülow paper.

The debate over defense and security revealed two conflicting conceptions of SPD policy. On the one hand, the missile decision was seen as marking "a cleansing of the party," a fundamental break with the past. It represented a commitment, as mentioned earlier, to "stake everything on negotiating away nuclear weapons,"<sup>84</sup> and it foreshadowed further initiatives, particularly in respect of the expression of specifically German or European interests within the Western Alliance. Moreover, it represented an affirmation of the SPD's continuing commitment to disarmament talks between East and West à la Bahr. On the other hand, it was set firmly in a *détente* tradition of SPD politics going back to Gustav Heinemann and embracing both Brandt and Schmidt. It was not in the least incompatible with the strongest

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<sup>82</sup>*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 9 November 1985.

<sup>83</sup>"Friedens und Sicherheitspolitik. Beschluss des Parteivorstandes der SPD vom 28.4.1986", *Politik, Informationsdienst der SPD*, no. 5, May 1986, noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 341.

<sup>84</sup>Speech: Willy Brandt, Landesparteitag Bremen, 22 June 1985, (SPD Parteivorstand, Pressearchiv, Ollenhauerstrasse, Bonn), noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 341.

possible commitment to the Western Alliance as the cornerstone of the party's defense policy and the foundation of the international peace order.<sup>85</sup>

The plan from Andreas von Bülow for a new West German security policy was clearly linked to the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. It tried to overcome the potential damage to *détente* that "conventionalization" within the context of the present military strategy would entail. Under the doctrine and posture of NATO, conventionalization meant increasing the size of NATO's conventional forces in the Federal Republic to match the Warsaw Pact forces. Von Bülow believed that new conventional technology made conventional defense possible without increasing the number of people in arms. This concentration on conventional weapons influenced, and was also probably influenced by, Egon Bahr and the security-based contacts with the SED during this time.

### **Reemergence of the German Question**

The German Question, seemingly dormant for many years, resurfaced with surprising vehemence during the early 1980s. The period of *détente* marked by West Germany's *Ostpolitik* appeared to have laid the German Question to rest, but it reemerged with the end of *détente* and the onset of a new Cold War that was characterized by renewed efforts on the part of the United States to contain the Soviet Union. The German Question, raised and repeatedly posed during the first Cold War, seemed to receive a new impetus as the second Cold War set in.

The new Kohl government, whose leaders had once vehemently opposed the *Ostpolitik* pursued by the SPD/FDP coalition, found itself in a bind. Faced with the rise of a significant peace movement with uncertain public appeal, that argued that the much valued results of *Ostpolitik* might be lost if the government proceeded with INF deployment, it decided to counter that argument by continuing the previous government's *Ostpolitik* and thus adhering to a policy of regional *détente*, against American preferences at that.<sup>86</sup> The Kohl government

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<sup>85</sup>Speech: Johannes Rau, Ahlen 16 December 1985. *Politik: Informations- dienst der SPD*, no. 13, December 1985, noted in Stephen Padgett, "The West German Social Democrats in Opposition 1982-86," in *West European Politics*, 1987, p. 341.

<sup>86</sup>The beginnings of an *Ostpolitik* were made by CDU Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder, who took up contacts, particularly, at the trade level, with East European states. See Chapter Ten

also felt it necessary to maintain good relations with the GDR in order to pre-empt some possibly dangerous nationalistic and neutralist appeals by the peace movement.<sup>87</sup> It therefore practiced continuity where many had expected a complete turnaround.

In the Federal Republic, some of the more conservative elements within the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition felt encouraged to voice their dissent regarding their government's policy of continuing *Ostpolitik*, not because it was an exercise in "pan-Germanism," but rather for the opposite reason - that it did not seek vigorously enough the reunification of Germany and the recovery of "lost territories" in the East. They complained that in the process of *détente* and *Ostpolitik*, the Federal Republic was giving up too many of its legal claims for dubious concessions regarding human rights.<sup>88</sup> Thus the internal West German debate heated up considerably.

Interestingly enough, this debate, both in public discussion and published form,<sup>89</sup> eventually began to focus on the question whether the German Question might still be open or not. The official position was clear: The German Question was still open and would remain open until the time when "a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation [would] regain its unity through free self-determination" had been achieved. As mentioned in the first chapter, this phrase, first used in the "Letter on German Unity" that the West German government presented to the Soviets in the context of concluding the Moscow Treaty of 1970, had become the standard formula for describing the West German goal of reunification. The West German claims were based above all on legal considerations. As mentioned, the Federal Republic's constitution, the Basic Law as adopted on 23 May 1949, spoke in its Preamble of the German people as "animated by the resolve to preserve their national and political unity" and declared: "The entire German people are called upon to achieve in free self-determination the unity and freedom of Germany."

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"*Ostpolitik, Deutschlandpolitik and the Two Germanies*," in Paterson and Southern, (eds.), *Governing Germany*, 1991, p. 286.

<sup>87</sup>*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, "Kohls Beharren auf dem Wiedervereinigungs-Ziel ist nur ein neues Stueck einer alten Linie," 14 July 1983, p. 5.

<sup>88</sup>See Clay Clemens, *Reluctant Realists: The Christian Democrats and West German Ostpolitik*, 1989.

<sup>89</sup>Jürgen C. Hess, "Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland auf dem Wege zur Nation?," *Neuere Politische Literatur*, Fall 1981, pp. 292-324.



These and other provisions in the Basic Law which referred to the continued existence of the German nation had consistently been interpreted as a mandate for the Federal Republic to insist on the unity of Germany and to bring about its reunification.<sup>90</sup>

It was not only domestic constitutional law that spoke of one Germany and thus kept the German Question open. International legal provisions arising from the *Reich's* unconditional surrender in 1945 and the subsequent disposition of Four-Power rights and responsibilities also pointed to the openness of the German Question. Even the Soviet Union was seen to be adhering to the concept of the continued existence of Germany as a whole, in its insistence on retaining the "hostile nations clause" in the UN Charter, for instance, or in its acceptance of the "Letter on German Unity." West German observers had noted with considerable interest feeble East German efforts to refer to the "group of Soviet forces in the GDR," and immediate Soviet insistence on the proper term: "group of Soviet forces in Germany."<sup>91</sup>

For the SPD, the problem of trying to ensure the security of the Federal Republic without contradicting its constitutionality, and without the aspirations of *Ostpolitik* to overcome the division of Germany and Europe in a new European security system, was a central dilemma. The SPD remained committed to *Ostpolitik* and was willing to modify military policy to facilitate its "second-phase." The goal of the "second phase" was to "dismantle the military confrontation" in the middle of Europe. The first phase of *Ostpolitik* was a series of diplomatic initiatives whose foundation was a specific military-political balance. In effect, it brought diplomacy and political relations into agreement with the *status quo*. The "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was qualitatively different. It proposed to alter the military-strategic *status quo* in order to facilitate political-diplomatic initiatives.

Initially, the SPD remained committed to NATO. Yet, as the party was thrust into opposition, the SPD was freed from the governmental necessity of supporting

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<sup>90</sup>For a more in-depth look into the Basic Law and the national question, see Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, p. 391-405 *passim*.

<sup>91</sup>Karl Feldmeyer, "Beharren auf Deutschland," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 May 1985, p. 1.

NATO. William E. Paterson explained that with the SPD's new situation, the party was able to concentrate more on *Ostpolitik*, i.e., relations with the East. Moreover, the party's opposition status allowed the SPD to avoid the necessity to deal with uncomfortable contradictions; however, it also tended to perpetuate the impression, particularly in the United States, that the SPD was neutralist. The SPD's focus on good relations with the Soviet Union as its first priority in foreign policy caused serious doubts in Washington. The failure of traditional politics in the 1980s to find lasting solutions to these political dilemmas generated criticism among those within the SPD who did not share the pragmatic and traditionally realist perspective of West German politics. The changing political consciousness that challenged the moral validity of the concept of nuclear deterrence and the premises of military security policy had sharpened the debate over security policy. A part of this new political consciousness was an effort to find simple solutions to the complex problems of modernism, resulting in a neo-nationalist rejection of what the SPD perceived as the materialist consumerism of the West.<sup>92</sup> The longing for a true community of people, *echte Volksgemeinschaft*, combined with the rejection of the values of industrial society, created a "reservoir of neutralism" within the SPD.<sup>93</sup> Moreover, according to Schweigler, "most West Germans [lacked] any understanding of the use of military power even by their allies."<sup>94</sup> This rejection of the legitimacy of force was closely associated with the increasingly widespread perception that the United States and the Soviet Union were morally and politically equivalent.<sup>95</sup>

Proponents of the idea that the German Question was, for all intents and purposes, closed, based their arguments primarily on their perceptions of German and European realities (and concomitant requirements for peace). They simply saw no chance that reunification could ever be achieved, especially given Soviet resistance to any such effort, but also the reluctance of other European states to have the *status quo* in Europe changed so drastically. The longer the division of Germany lasted, they believed, the more acceptable it would eventually become to

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<sup>92</sup>Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of the Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 139.

<sup>93</sup>Michael Neumann, "Germany's Quest for Identity and the Future of American-German Relations," speech at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, 13 April 1985; noted in op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>94</sup>Gebhard Schweigler, "Unraveling at the Margins? West Germany and the Alliance," *Harvard International Review* 9, no. 1. (November/December 1986), p. 33.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

the Germans themselves. From this perspective, the German Question could no longer be considered open.

Prominent members of the SPD, once in opposition, started voicing their belief that the German Question was indeed no longer open. Hans Apel, former Minister of Defense, was among the first to call the German Question dead, arousing considerable controversy in the process. Egon Bahr, principal architect of *Ostpolitik*, argued that the German Question was indeed so wide open that it was simply beyond imagination how it could ever be closed. And Willy Brandt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic during the period of *détente* and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts, referred to hopes for reunification as "a dream . . . which is over when you wake up."<sup>96</sup> Klaus Bölling, once Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's spokesman and later his Permanent Representative in the GDR, suggested the elimination of the call for reunification in the Preamble of the Basic Law.<sup>97</sup>

Chancellor Kohl answered the SPD position in his annual "State of the Nation" message, delivered on 27 February 1985, at the height of the debate about the German Question:

Nor can the German Question as a key European question be declared terminated by either politicians or historians. It has been one of the great questions of the shaping of Europe ever since the system of European powers came into being centuries ago. It has always been and still is the question of how Germany is to be incorporated into Europe and how the Germans become integrated and assume or refuse their European responsibility.<sup>98</sup>

Yet, there were also some indications that the debate would eventually reach conservative circles as well. One of West Germany's most prominent historians, Golo Mann, frequently a spokesperson for conservative causes, told a startled CSU gathering in 1984 that he considered the West Germans' fatherland to be the Federal Republic, nothing more, certainly not a larger Germany which, he claimed, could no longer be achieved. The subsequent debate revealed that "the

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<sup>96</sup>Willy Brandt "Ein Traum, der vorüber ist, wenn man aufwacht," *Fankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 November 1984, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup>Klaus Bölling, "Die offene deutsche Frage," *Der Spiegel*, no. 18, 1985, pp. 52-3.

<sup>98</sup>Helmut Kohl, "State of the Nation in Divided Germany," speech to the Bundestag, 27 February 1985, The German Information Center, *Statements and Speeches*, 5 March 1985, pp. 4-6.

time of referring to the German Question in the style of comic-strip balloons" was coming to an end even within the CSU.<sup>99</sup>

A prominent leader of the SPD and an influential architect of the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*, Karsten Voigt, wrote:

Changes in the security policy of the Federal Republic are possible only step by step and over the long term. Changing institutions and decision-making processes is far more important than the originality of the ideas of specific individuals. ... A second phase of *détente* must have not only security and disarmament but also foreign and domestic policy goals for Europe beyond the year 2000 in sight. The borders will remain, but step by step, the structures of the participating societies and their foreign policy interests and ties will change.<sup>100</sup>

The four components of the SPD's *détente* strategy in the 1980s on which there was a broad consensus within the party, were:

- the rejection of attempts at spectacular, radical changes in the political, military situation in Europe, which was seen as endangering the security of the Federal Republic and its NATO allies;
- the creation of a realistic domestic political consensus, which accepted the long-term nature of the process and understood that it will be "full of contradictions and setbacks";<sup>101</sup>
- the cultivation of new institutions for East/West dialogue in Europe, and the utilization of existing frameworks, at both governmental (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) and non-governmental (sister cities, school exchanges) levels, to expand this dialogue into new political, economic, and cultural areas; and
- the concentration of Bonn's political efforts on the "separation" (*Trennung*) of Eastern and Western Europe and of Germany, rather than on the "division" (*Teilung*) of the continent and Germany; in other words, a focus on making the borders between all European states as "permeable" as they were within Western Europe.<sup>102</sup>

Indeed the "new thinking" within the SPD contributed to a more ideological posture in which foreign and security policies were emphasized. As has been

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<sup>99</sup>*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, "Mit den Sprechblasen ist es aus," 22 October 1984, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup>Karsten Voigt, "Neubestimmung einer Sicherheitspolitik der Linken," *Sozialismus*, February/March 1986, p. 3-4.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>102</sup>See Theo Sommer, "Hausieren mit einem alten Hut," *Die Zeit*, 5 June 1987, p. 1.



discussed in this chapter, both the "old guard" and new generation or "68ers" combined to form this new outlook. Beginning in the discussions surrounding the twin-track decision and motivated by the party's opposition status, the SPD exemplified a new orientation centered around changing the *status quo* in Europe. Moreover, the SPD's party programs exhibit many of these new concepts. However, the underlying influence, both in the 1980s and also previously in the government of Willy Brandt, was Egon Bahr. There can be no doubt that the SPD paved the way in the early 1980s for future contacts with the SED by re-addressing its position on foreign and security policy, but the contacts were eventually realized under the guidance of Egon Bahr. Unquestionably, Egon Bahr was able to bridge the gap between governance and opposition with his notions regarding foreign and security policy. This chapter examined the significant shift in emphasis of the Social Democrats in the 1980s; however, in order to truly examine the catalyst for the future contacts between the SPD and SED, the policies of Egon Bahr must be explored.

## *Egon Bahr and "Common Security"*

I was the one who said, "just consider, what are really the laws or rules of the security in the nuclear age?" And then I sat down, taking some time, and began to contemplate. And then I arrived at the, for myself surprising, point that in the age of *mutual (sic) assured destruction*, one cannot plan for victory: there is none; one cannot win war anymore. This means that the situation is [now] different from all that we hitherto knew in history, when one had to win against the enemy. If this is correct, it means that I am only capable of surviving together with the enemy, and of course it is better to live than to die; thus either we die together or live together - which means we [all] have a common security.<sup>1</sup>

### **"Change through *Rapprochement*" and "Common Security"**

Egon Bahr is well known for two concepts which he developed and attempted to employ in their respective circumstances. The first concept *Wandel durch Annäherung* (change through *rapprochement*), developed by Bahr in 1963 in response to the construction of the Berlin Wall, recognized that Germany and Europe were divided and in order to overcome the *status quo* (i.e. a divided Germany) one would first have to accept it.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this concept also recognized that the West could no longer directly interfere in internal affairs east of the Iron Curtain without risking a potential nuclear conflict.<sup>3</sup> Thus it was Bahr's view that the Adenauer government's policy of "change through strength" was flawed when faced with this political and territorial *fait accompli*.

It was this state of international affairs which caused Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt and others to rethink West German foreign policy assumptions. Accepting the immobility of power-political structures of the time, their policy was intended to relax tensions (*Entspannung*), re-establish day-to-day contact between the people of both countries and thereby keep the German question open for as long as

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995. This was in response to the question: "Do you feel that you came up with the idea of common security?" In the end Bahr stated "yes" to the question. NB: The italics represent that he spoke the English words "mutual assured destruction."

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995; see also chapter one for a review of this policy.

<sup>3</sup> Egon Bahr, "Den Luxus rigoröser Gesinnungsethik konnte sich niemand leisten," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 19 February 1992.

possible. Pragmatic policies were at the heart of Social Democratic *Ostpolitik*.<sup>4</sup> While there was no immediate path towards reunification, the option was to be kept open while engaging both sides in a non-military competition. In the long-run, some leading SPD politicians believed, democracy and economic strength would prevail and Germany would eventually be reunited.<sup>5</sup>

This view was prominent within the SPD prior to the FDP switch to the Union parties which brought down Helmut Schmidt's government in 1982. Yet, after the *Wende* (turning point) of 1982, Social Democrats demanded a new phase of *détente*<sup>6</sup> to counteract the deterioration in the East-West climate. They believed that the two Germanies had an intrinsic responsibility as well as a vital concern in initiating another attempt to lower tensions, especially because their central position in Europe (*Mittellage*). In addition, as the main opposition party within the *Bundestag*, the SPD was especially keen to be regarded as responsible and fit to secure multilateral agreements.<sup>7</sup>

The second concept developed by Bahr in the early 1980s - "common security" (*gemeinsame Sicherheit*) - was fundamentally different from his previous concept. Although "common security" was similar to *rapprochement* in the fact that it accepted the divided status of Germany, "common security" argued for a change in the *status quo* in relation to security issues. Essentially, "common security" asserted that deterrence (in the nuclear-age) as a preventer of war was outdated. "Common security" demanded a reexamination of the theories surrounding the avoidance of war. The distinction between *Ostpolitik* and the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* is similar to the distinction between *rapprochement* and "common security." Security was at the heart of both new expressions. *Rapprochement* was

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<sup>4</sup>Jürgen Schmude, "Was Heißt hier Wendehals?" *Die Zeit*, 9 March 1990. See also Peter H. Merkl, *German Unification in the European Context*, 1993, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup>For more on this view see chapter one.

<sup>6</sup>This expression is another term for the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. As Klaus Moseleit explains, there existed many terms for this same policy such as "second phase" of *Deutschlandpolitik*, "second phase" of *Entspannung* (denoted above), and "second phase" of *Entspannungspolitik*. See Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD: 1983-1989*, 1991, footnote # 2.

<sup>7</sup>As mentioned in the introduction chapter, it was past foreign policy successes such as *Ostpolitik* that motivated the SPD in the field of foreign policy. Moreover, it was through foreign policy that the SPD felt it could show the German electorate that it was able to govern again. See also chapter two.

the doctrine of *Ostpolitik*; likewise, "common security" was the doctrine of the "second phase."

The purpose of this chapter will be an examination of Egon Bahr's concept of "common security," how it came to be expressed in the Palme Commission, and how it related to the policies of the SPD and their "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. The significance of this chapter lies in its examination of the principles of "common security" which can be viewed as the framework for the contacts between the SPD and SED which will be covered in the next chapter. Moreover, in examining the Palme Commission, one can better understand the later proposals between the two parties.

Egon Bahr argued that political and strategic thinking was still dominated by the concepts of the "pre-nuclear" age which focused security against the enemy in order to win a war. "Common security" was to make a "qualitative leap" from pre-nuclear age thinking to an "new thinking" which understood the dangers of annihilation.<sup>8</sup> The first point of "common security" was that global problems should have global solutions. Thus Bahr argued that the field of armaments should be viewed in a global context like the fields of economic, science, finance, raw materials and the environment. For example, he stated, "multinational companies cross national frontiers without consideration of the different political and social systems in the countries of origin, that is, [business] is not conducted in a historically 'correct' fashion."<sup>9</sup> He argued for the development of rules which individual states would submit to in their own interest as well as in the interest of the rest of the world. However as Valentine Falin, Soviet expert on arms negotiations pointed out, "I think that that is a somewhat simplified view of the issue. If we refer to past experience, we can see that wars often broke out between countries having no problems concerning free passage, the exchange of ideas, etc. In fact, some of today's wars and conflicts have occurred between such countries."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Egon Bahr, "Paper 2: Observations on the Principle of common security," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Policies for Common Security*, 1985, p. 31.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>10</sup>Valentine Falin in, *What Can Europe Do?: A Soviet-West German Discussion in Moscow*, 1987, p. 8.



The second point of "common security" was that ideological differences and the enforcement of one's own values, including human rights, and the claim to self-determination of people, "all have to take a back seat, for they will not have a chance to assert themselves unless nuclear peace is maintained." Bahr admitted that the abolition of nuclear weapons was unrealistic; yet, he argued for verifiable renunciation of further development of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty: "Agreements between the present nuclear powers to exercise self-restraint could have a positive influence on the non-nuclear states, and would be the most effective means of reducing the risk that new powers will enter the arena."<sup>11</sup>

The third point of "common security" dealt with the failure of deterrence. The failure was that deterrence connected war prevention with the capacity to fight wars. Thus Bahr argued that it was not deterrence that prevented nuclear war, but the "fear of the actual weapons." Furthermore, deterrence, he argued, depended on the expectation that your enemy too understands the laws of deterrence and applies them rationally. For Bahr, the "threat of annihilating what actually should be defended was not a persuasive perspective. So [according to Bahr] the deterrence doctrine must be abandoned and replaced by something else."<sup>12</sup>

Therefore the fourth point of "common security" called for going "beyond deterrence." Bahr argued that the concept of "common security" had both a political and military component. The political element was the comprehension that the potential enemy was an indispensable partner and the security of the potential enemy was shared by both. Thus the notion of surviving together or perishing together. "Common security" would allow this joint security to be organized together: "to that extent, the doctrine of 'common security' is the military component of *détente*." Moreover, in military terms, the doctrine of "common security" was a means in which neither side could "gain military advantages that could be put to use without unacceptable risks" and governments would "enter verifiable agreements that would guarantee military stability and thus build confidence."<sup>13</sup> This stability would come in the form of superpower

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<sup>11</sup>Egon Bahr, "Paper 2: Observations on the Principle of common security," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Policies for Common Security*, 1985, p. 32-33.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34-35.

negotiations. Egon Bahr explained that the SALT negotiations had resulted from the definition of a common interest similar to that of "common security."<sup>14</sup>

In order to implement them, "common security" would require five key steps. "The doctrine of 'common security' cannot be substituted for that of deterrence in a single sweep." The first would be the exchange of information on the introduction of upgraded systems; the second step would be a corresponding agreement aimed at the prevention of such upgrading, or "at least of the de-stabilizing means of mass annihilation"; the third step would be arms limitation in terms of quality; the fourth step would be cutbacks which would be in "the common interest"; and the fifth step would be denuclearization.<sup>15</sup> As Bahr stated, "I believe [there] are people who've set themselves a reachable goal. We ought to be not only optimistic. We should think in terms of what steps can take us closer to that goal. I don't know if we'll be able to reach it by the year 2000. Perhaps, we'll achieve it by 2005. That would also be good."<sup>16</sup>

### **Common Security and the Palme Commission**

As mentioned earlier, in the early 1980s the fear of Soviet invasion was replaced by the prevailing fear of war: war which could be perpetrated mutually by both blocs. Thus it was believed by Bahr that deterrence would lead to war in Europe. Disarmament and a new security policy became the two key components of his alternative agenda. When Schmidt suggested a "Security Partnership" between East and West in 1978, his definition of that term was still based on an East-West balance of power.<sup>17</sup> "Common security," the new concept, was not only a

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<sup>14</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>15</sup>Egon Bahr, "Paper 2: Observations on the Principle of common security," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Policies for Common Security*, 1985, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup>Egon Bahr in, *What Can Europe Do?: A Soviet-West German Discussion in Moscow*, 1987, p. 22.

<sup>17</sup>"The Soviet Union can't preserve its peace alone, any more than the United States and Western Europe can preserve theirs alone. For this we need the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization, and you need us and the Americans, and NATO. Helmut Schmidt in op. cit., p. 19. For a review of Schmidt's first call for a "security partnership" see Helmut Schmidt, "Rede vor der 10. Sondergeneralversammlung der UNO für Abrüstung am 25.5.1978 in New York," *Bulletin der Bundesregierung*, 30 May 1978, p. 530; see also "Bundes-Delegierten-Konferenz und Außerordentlicher Parteitag der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands 9. und 10. Dezember 1978 in Köln, *Protokoll der Verhandlungen Dokumentarischer Anhang: Vorstand der SPD*, 1978, pp. 76-81.

political enhancement to *détente*, but a replacement for deterrence.<sup>18</sup> Despite the fact that "common security" and "security partnership" were used throughout the 1980s by the SPD, they represent quite different international political concepts.<sup>19</sup> By 1984 this new concept became official SPD policy on security as confirmed by the party convention in Essen.<sup>20</sup>

The concept of "common security" was developed during the discussions of the Palme Commission from its first meeting in September 1980 to its twelfth meeting in April 1982 in which the report *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament* was composed. At the heart of the Commission's deliberations was Egon Bahr. The Palme Commission consisted of senior politicians from both Eastern and Western countries who met under the chairmanship of the Swedish ex-premier Olof Palme. Others like Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Nigerian head of state, David Owen, former U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and Olof Palme himself were active participants in the discussions regarding security in the nuclear age. First presented at a Commission meeting in Tokyo was Egon Bahr's own paper *Common Security*. See *Annexe*.

The Palme Commission report contained much of Bahr's own language. The report contained a detailed blueprint for reductions in nuclear weapons, confidence-building measures, and limitations on the qualitative arms race. Moreover, the report included recommendations for strengthening the United Nations security system, limitations on conventional arms proliferation and reductions in military budgets. Above all, the commission strove for serious, sustained and rational discussions of security, bringing together international leaders with significantly diverse political viewpoints. Initially, Egon Bahr's "common security," as used by the Palme Commission, was not envisioned as a

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<sup>18</sup>Egon Bahr, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, vol. I, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Karsten Voigt explained that Helmut Schmidt and Egon Bahr were often at odds over this issue. Furthermore, Egon Bahr often refused using the term "security partnership" because it merely represented an extension of deterrence and Bahr thought that deterrence was fundamentally flawed. However, throughout the 1980s, Bahr supported SPD documents with this terminology precisely because it was actually and often more closely related to "common security" than a "security partnership." Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>20</sup>See "Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Menschenrechte" in *Willy Brandt: Zwischen Essener Parteitag und Irseer Entwurf: Reden, Artikel und Interviews zu Fragen des neuen Grundsatzprogramms (1984-86)*, SPD Document, 1986, pp. 19-20.

universal cure or singular principle for international political harmony. As Egon Bahr stated, many steps would be needed in order to reach the final goal of "common security" of a denuclearized Europe.<sup>21</sup> Thus the superpower blocs would be necessary for coordination.

The alliances remain indispensable in the interest of stability and security. Their principle, that the violation of the frontier of one partner is to be considered as an attack on the security of all the others, also corresponds to the idea of common security. Common security can be achieved only with the alliances, and with their leading powers, certainly not against or without them.<sup>22</sup>

It was based however on the unique circumstances of the nuclear period and aimed to prevent, at all costs, nuclear war. In effect, peace was most vital; above any ideology.<sup>23</sup>

Preventive action is therefore needed urgently. The problems we confront are man-made problems. Humanity has it within its power to contain the dangers and embark upon a programme for the reduction and eventual abolition of the forces of destruction. The efforts so far have been too feeble and their results too meager for this Commission to recommend merely renewed commitment and enhanced endeavor. More of the same will not do. We recognize the constraints which apply, the competing interests and mutual suspicions which permeate international relations. We see the need for a new beginning in the peaceful struggle against war and destruction.<sup>24</sup>

It was Bahr's view and the view of his counterparts in the Palme Commission that a nuclear conflict could not be won, and would be impossible to control if begun.

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<sup>21</sup>Egon Bahr, "Paper 2: Observations on the Principle of common security," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Policies for Common Security*, 1985, p. 32-33.

<sup>22</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 182-183.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995. When asked "if peace was above all?," Bahr responded, "yes, of course! ...Brandt had composed one simple formula '*Frieden ist nicht alles, aber ohne Frieden ist alles nichts*!' [Peace is not everything, but without peace everything is nothing] ... humanity, human rights ... you have to live! ...that's the most important. Peace is the most important."

<sup>24</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, p. 138.



The nuclear arsenals in Europe are awesome. Furthermore, the Commission is deeply concerned about those nuclear postures and doctrines which dangerously and erroneously suggest that it may be possible to fight and "win" a limited nuclear war.<sup>25</sup>

Maintaining command and control over such weapons in "the fog of war" would be difficult. Pressures for delegation of authority to use nuclear weapons to local commanders and for their early use would be strong. The danger of crossing the nuclear threshold and of further escalation could become acute. It should be remembered in this connection that the areas close to the East-West border in Central Europe are densely populated and contain large industrial concentrations.<sup>26</sup>

Nuclear deterrence was consequently perceived as an unacceptable foundation for stable peace. This crucial point was reiterated throughout the text.

The search for arms control and disarmament is the pursuit of common gains, not unilateral advantage. *A doctrine of common security must replace the present expedient of deterrence through armaments. International peace must rest on a commitment to joint survival rather than a threat of mutual destruction.*<sup>27</sup>

The primary belief of Egon Bahr and the Palme Commission members was that even resentful political and ideological adversaries should cooperate in limiting the scope of their competition in a "partnership" against nuclear warfare.

A secure existence, free from physical and psychological threats to life and limb, is one of the most elementary desires of humanity. It is the fundamental reason why human beings choose to organize nation states, sacrificing certain individual freedoms for the common good - security. It is a right shared by all - regardless of where they live, regardless of their ideological or political convictions.<sup>28</sup>

Like Bahr's own Conception C in his planning staff paper of 1968,<sup>29</sup> the new notion of "common security" certainly envisaged going beyond NATO and the Warsaw Pact to a new European security system.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 139. Italics by Commission.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>For this see Egon Bahr, *Sicherheit für und vor Deutschland*, 1991, pp. 74-82.

[Instituted would be an] *agreement on Confidence and Security Building Measures which would apply to all of Europe, contribute to military security, be verifiable, and constitute a binding and lasting commitment. The Commission considers this effort an important contribution to the growth of a system and practice of common Security in Europe.*<sup>30</sup>

The new ideas on European security in the 1980s contained substantial elements of earlier Social Democratic blueprints for European security from the 1950s and many of the collective security ideas popular on the left in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>31</sup> The theme of "common security" became popular in its use throughout the 1980s. The expression was used frequently in the Helsinki process; it became a recurring focus of Mikhail Gorbachev regarding arms control in the mid-to-late 1980s; and by 1991,<sup>32</sup> it was even a component of NATO ministerial declarations.

Egon Bahr's "common security" was an idea concerned with the specific threat of nuclear weapons. Political confrontation, he postulated, should be "unlinked" from nuclear disengagement. In a section of *Common Security* entitled "Linkages between arms negotiations and political events" the Palme Commission stated:

Disarmament efforts do not move forward in a political vacuum. They must reflect political interests and the political order and are thus an integral part of international relations. However, it is important not to construct, as a matter of deliberate policy, linkages between particular negotiations to limit specific aspects of the arms race and international behaviour in general. The task of diplomacy is to split and subdivide conflicts rather than generalize and aggregate them. Linking them into broader issues tends to limit, rather than broaden, the scope for diplomatic manoeuvre. Progress in arms negotiations is not a reward for either negotiating partner; it is a means for both to capitalize on their common interest in security and survival.

At the same time it must be recognized that significant movement towards disarmament will proceed only with difficulty in the absence of broader political accommodation. The two interact and must move together. They can aid one another in facilitating progress, but neither can proceed very far without progress in the other. Just as arms negotiations would fail in the absence of political accommodation, so too would movement towards more cooperative political and economic relations come to an end

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<sup>30</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, p. 152. Italics by Commission.

<sup>31</sup>See Padgett and Paterson, *Social Democracy in Post-war Europe*, 1991.

<sup>32</sup>For this argument see chapter six.

without concurrent progress towards stabilization of the military balance and reductions in the size of armed forces.<sup>33</sup>

Because of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD), the commission argued that neither of the antagonists could reasonably hope for victory in a nuclear war. Both would be deprived of any gains.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, no one would be able to protect his own territory without destroying it in the process.<sup>35</sup> Bahr believed that "common security" between the two blocs had become a reality long before it ever developed into a political concept. A "nuclear war would be the end of everything."<sup>36</sup> With this as the starting point, SPD politicians suggested that peace and security had become the first and foremost tasks of international politics. There would be no more "just wars," because nothing could possibly justify the end of the human race.<sup>37</sup> "Under threat of the human race's self-destruction, co-existence has become a question of existence. Co-existence has come to be not one of several accepted options, but the course for survival."<sup>38</sup> This was not a new idea in the early 1980s, but it had now become the banner for the opposition to a policy which claimed that there were more important things in life than peace. Opposed to this notion, Egon Bahr, Karsten Voigt and others insisted that the maintenance of non-war was the overriding concern in Europe, however minimalist in perspective. Every state was now seen to acquire a basic interest in preventing a nuclear exchange and sharing its security responsibilities with others.<sup>39</sup> While Social Democrats continued to proclaim their differences with Soviet-style Communists, they concentrated their political efforts on keeping a "negative peace" (absence of war).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 10-11.

<sup>34</sup>Egon Bahr, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup>Oskar Lafontaine in SPD document, "Für eine europäische Friedensordnung, Materialien der Programmwerkstatt," 1988, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Egon Bahr, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup>Willy Brandt, "Rede beim Programm-Parteitag," Presseservice der SPD, Berlin 18 December 1989, p. 432.

<sup>39</sup>Oskar Lafontaine in SPD document, "Für eine europäische Friedensordnung, Materialien der Programmwerkstatt," 1988, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup>For the theory of "negative peace" see chapter two.

Common security, as a concept, is characterized by its correlation between realism and optimism. By one indication, political compromise is essential in circumventing a nuclear war. As Palme stated, "the task of diplomacy is to limit, split, and subdivide conflicts, not to generalize and aggregate them."<sup>41</sup> By the second indication, nuclear weapons are an unacceptable evil. As Palme stated further, "the idea of a world in which international relations are based on the rule of law, cooperation, and peaceful pursuit of political ends must be held high."<sup>42</sup> Defenders of "common security" state unequivocally that it was a prescription for policies concerned with nuclear weapons, and not for a pursuit of a political end. Thus, they argue that "common security" promoted, rather than impeded, the relatively peaceful end of Communism in Europe.

The strength of "common security" at that time was its realism. Based on the two blocs, the concept did not require the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact first, nor was the end of deterrence a prerequisite.<sup>43</sup> Social Democrats did not simply reject deterrence for ideological but for pragmatic reasons as well. Bahr argued that the balance of terror had been, and still was, a strategy for a transitional period only.<sup>44</sup> While sections of the party demanded a more far-reaching break with the SPD's security policies of the past, "common security" connected a vision with step-by-step reforms.<sup>45</sup>

### **Structural Inability to Attack**

By the mid 1980s, the overarching idea of "common security" began to be combined with proposals for defensive defense. Structural inability to attack (*Strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*)<sup>46</sup> as it was termed, started to be seen as an

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<sup>41</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>43</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bei einer Zeitenwende kann niemand sagen: weiter wie bisher," Interview with *Neues Deutschland*, 18/19 January 1992.

<sup>44</sup>Egon Bahr, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup>Konrad Gilges, "Essener Parteitag und wie weiter? Zur friedenspolitischen Programmdiskussion in der SPD," in Fuchs, Hoffmann, Horst, (eds) *Konzepte zum Frieden, Vorschläge für eine neue Abrüstungs- und Entspannungspolitik der SPD*, Berlin, 1985, p. 45.

<sup>46</sup>*Strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit* was introduced by Albrecht A.C. von Müller in July 1983. See Albrecht A.C. von Müller, "Stellungnahme zum Thema: 'Strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit,'" pp. 60-62; see also Dieter Lutz, "Zur Genesis Struktureller Nichtangriffsfähigkeit," in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds.), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit: Konventionelle Stabilität*, 1988, pp. 26-35.



alternative military posture, which would minimize either side's threat to the other.<sup>47</sup> Organization, structure, weaponry, strategy and doctrine had to be changed so that neither West nor East were capable of mounting an offensive. Leaving earlier concepts about the parity of individual weapon categories behind, notions about defensive defense grew out of debates about "common security."<sup>48</sup> After formulating an alternative to deterrence, Social Democrats felt it necessary to describe a defense posture in accordance with their political proposals because disarmament alone was not convincing to those who still believed in retaining military means for security.<sup>49</sup>

However, not all members of the SPD could support such an alternate defense. For example, in response to Bahr's statement, "It seems to me that we should begin disarming to a certain level at which neither side could attack the other. This applies both to nuclear and conventional weapons. It means that both sides would continue to be capable of defending themselves but they would not be able to attack," Helmut Schmidt stated:

[T]he remarks of my friend, Egon Bahr, appear too optimistic to me. He said that both sides ought to build their defenses so that they can defend themselves without being able to attack. In practice, this wouldn't be an easy thing to do. ... On this point I feel somewhat more skeptical than my friend, Egon Bahr, and this is due to the fact that indeed I was Defense Minister some time ago ... I am in favor of things being considered as they are, without donning either the pessimistic black spectacles or the optimistic rose-tinted ones.<sup>50</sup>

In relation to alternative defense proposals, it would be useful to discuss briefly some specific proposals other than "common security" in order to analyze the similarities and the differences. Hans Günter Brauch states that the debate on structural changes of the armed forces was influenced by criticism of NATO's flexible response strategy by Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker and Horst Afheldt, by

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<sup>47</sup>Dieter Lutz, *Lexikon Rüstung-Frieden-Sicherheit*, München, 1987, p. 305.

<sup>48</sup>von Bülow, in Konrad Gilges, "Essener Parteitag und wie weiter? Zur friedenspolitischen Programmdiskussion in der SPD," in, Fuchs, Hoffmann, Horst, (eds) *Konzepte zum Frieden, Vorschläge für eine neue Abrüstungs- und Entspannungspolitik der SPD*, Berlin, 1985, p. 49.

<sup>49</sup>Egon Bahr, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 25.

<sup>50</sup>Helmut Schmidt's response to a statement by Egon Bahr in, *What Can Europe Do?: A Soviet-West German Discussion in Moscow*, 1987, p. 9.

the Writings of the French officer Guy Brossolet, by the Austrian model, and to some extent by previous proposals by Bogislaw von Bonin and Ferdinand Otto Miksche who influenced by J. F. C. Fuller and Liddell Hart.<sup>51</sup> Brauch also states that there are three important structural designs for alternative defensive forces:

- the model of "area defense" (*Raumverteidigung*) proposed by Horst Afheldt;
- the "area covering defense" (*raumdeckende Verteidigung*) suggested by Jochen Löser; and
- the "fire barrier" (*Grenznahe Feuersperre*) advocated by Norbert Hanning.<sup>52</sup>

The "area defense" model would set up a network of "techno-commandos" all across the Federal Republic, excluding only the highly populated urban areas. "Area covering defense" suggests doubling the number of brigades of the *Bundeswehr* by relying more heavily on reservists, i.e., the further away from the forward-line of troops, the higher the reserve population would be. The "fire barrier" model suggests a trip wire along the demarcation line, four kilometers deep, which would be controlled permanently by electronic sensors, and in the case of conflict, it should become impossible to cross that barrier anywhere as a result of concentrated fire from the rear.

A realist idea of a structural inability to attack was compatible with disarmament as well as providing a back-drop in case structures of "common security" broke down. However, a minority within the SPD saw more in this concept. Their aim was the inability of state and society to attack another country, incorporating aspects of ideology and economy.<sup>53</sup> In essence, for representatives of these ideas, peace was one aspect of their critique of the capitalist system and a symbol for the "realization of democratic socialism."<sup>54</sup> Both interpretations were held by

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<sup>51</sup>See Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (ed.), *Kriegsfolgen und Kriegsverhütung*, 1970; Horst Afheldt, *Verteidigung und Frieden*, 1976 and *Atomkrieg: Das Verhältnis einer Politik mit militärischen Mitteln*, 1984; Guy Brossolet, *Essai sur la non-bataille*, 1975; Alain Carlton, *Dissuasion infranucleaire - l'école allemand de techno-guerilla*, 1984; Bogislaw von Bonin, *Opposition gegen Adenauers Sicherheitspolitik: Eine Dokumentation*, 1976; F. O. Miksche, "Präzisionswaffen verändern das Kriegsbild," *Wehrtechnik*, no. 5, 1977, pp. 17-23; noted in Hans Günter Brauch, "Federal Republic of Germany: Searching for Alternatives," *European Security Beyond the Year 2000*, 1988, p. 87.

<sup>52</sup>Hans Günter Brauch, "Federal Republic of Germany: Searching for Alternatives," *European Security Beyond the Year 2000*, 1988, p. 87.

<sup>53</sup>Konrad Gilges, "Essener Parteitag und wie weiter? Zur friedenspolitischen Programmdiskussion in der SPD," in, Fuchs, Hoffmann, Horst, (eds) *Konzepte zum Frieden, Vorschläge für eine neue Abrüstungs- und Entspannungspolitik der SPD*, Berlin, 1985, p. 47.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

members of the peace movement and the SPD. Neither wing predicted the dissolution of the Eastern bloc in the foreseeable future.

### **The Notion of Common Security and the SPD: 1983-1987**

In the early 1980s, the idea of "common security" began to gain momentum within the left wing of the SPD. In 1983, Egon Bahr, as chief strategic and arms control adviser to Willy Brandt (chairman of the party), submitted a report of the SPD working group on "new strategies." Despite the fact that he supported continued FRG membership in NATO, he advocated a partnership arrangement with the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Bahr advocated replacement of early-first-use of nuclear weapons with conventionalization; discontinuation of deep strike or offensive capabilities in favor of a purely defensive strategy; no nuclear weapons in either the FRG or GDR not controlled by the government of each state; and a long-range goal of a Europe completely free of nuclear weapons.<sup>55</sup> Bahr's "common security" found expression in numerous proposals by Social Democrats in the 1980s.

Bahr's ideas were elaborated in 1984 by his close confidant, Horst Ehmke, deputy chairman of the SPD parliamentary group. Ehmke's premise was that all Europeans, in the East and West, developed a common European feeling during *détente*. This feeling, however, did not affect their relation to their own military bloc. Despite Europe's growing economic strength, Ehmke declared, Europe became less important in international politics because of the Soviet's military build up and the United States' declining concern with Western Europe. He maintained that Western Europe should unite to assert itself against the threat of lethargic dependency. Western Europe should strengthen its position *vis-à-vis* the United States and NATO, including intelligence gathering and analysis in order to check the US drive toward thermonuclear superiority and war-fighting and war-winning strategies. Ehmke acknowledged that Western Europe had no real chance to guarantee its security without US nuclear protection; yet, he went on to argue that Western Europe should also have a security partnership with the Soviet Union because in the nuclear age, security cannot endure "against the opponent, but only

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<sup>55</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bericht der Arbeitsgruppe 'Neue Strategien' beim SPD Parteivorstand vom Juli 1983" in Hans-Gunter Brauch, *Sicherheitspolitik am Ende?*, 1984.

with it."<sup>56</sup> Like the Bahr report, Ehmke contended that Western Europe should only possess defensive weapons. The FRG should move towards a defensive strategy in which a transformation of deterrence into a security partnership occurred. Notably, Ehmke argued that even though the Soviet Union wanted to influence Western Europe, it did not want to invade it. Karsten Voigt added a component on human rights issues that he intended to show differed with the policies of the Greens. Voigt declared that while the SPD was in favor of human rights, concern for preserving peace was an overriding priority.<sup>57</sup>

By the 1986 Nuremberg conference, the "new thinking" was firmly established as party policy. "The peoples in the East-West conflict will either survive together or perish together," declared the main resolution on security policy. The 1986 defense policy of the SPD was characterized by formal approval of the Atlantic Alliance coupled with the actual promotion of the erosion of its power. This was clear in its three concepts:

1. The notion of a Security Partnership (*Sicherheitspartnerschaft*) with the Communist systems of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> A threat posed by the existence of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, was assumed. It was also assumed that both East and West had a common interest in protecting themselves from the threat posed by weapons. Paired with this was the desire for equidistance toward both superpowers. Thus understood, Washington's policy, like Moscow's was determined by its role as a superpower. Therefore, the two were seen as comparable. There was, moreover, a refusal to differentiate between a democracy and a dictatorship.

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<sup>56</sup> Horst Ehmke, "Überlegungen zur Selbstbehauptung Europas," *Aktuelle Informationen der SPD*, No. 1, January 1984. Here the term "security partnership" corresponded with the notion of "common security" as it related with Bahr's concept of collective survival.

<sup>57</sup> Karsten D. Voigt, "Reformpolitik braucht den Konsens über gemeinsame Reformprojekte - nur taktische Kompromisse schaffen noch keine Handlungsfähigkeit," in *Sicherheit und Frieden*, No. 4, 1986. Although the document refers to this "overriding priority," Voigt noted in 1995 that he always felt that peace was not above human rights (thus not totally in agreement with Egon Bahr) and that peace was a "precondition" for everything else. "Human rights," he stated, "were just as vital as peace." Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>58</sup> Dieter Lutz, in Egon Bahr and Dieter Lutz (eds), *Gemeinsame Sicherheit. Idee und Konzept*, Vol. I, 1986, p. 11.



2. For the German armed forces - as for those in the NATO Alliance as a whole - the SPD supported a "structurally non-aggressive capability" (*Strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*). However, beyond the logistically-founded incapability of German troops to conduct deep penetrating operations in the hinterlands of the Warsaw Pact, the SPD advocated the removal of tanks and other heavy equipment and effectively abandoned the concept of forward defense. The result of this would be that damage would be incurred exclusively by the territory which was attacked.

3. Weapons-free zones in Central Europe, first for chemical and nuclear weapons, and then for tanks and other heavy equipment.<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, suitable treaty proposals were worked out with the ruling Communist party in the GDR that would in part define German-German relations in the case of an SPD-led federal government.<sup>60</sup> Precisely these suggestions characterize the good faith with which the SPD confronted the Communist system. That such weapons can be fired into a weapons-free zone has been ignored just as much as the possibility, which closed systems have at their disposal, that such weapons could be brought back to the front and deployed for a surprise attack literally overnight.

Werner Kaltefleiter states that all of these considerations have in common an aversion to thinking in terms of securing peace through deterrence - in particular nuclear deterrence - and also of the Atlantic Alliance. As such, "the SPD might have liked to break out of a policy which had created a period of peace virtually unprecedented in Europe. Consequently, this peace has been defamed as a negative peace because it has not prevented conflicts. This has resulted in a quasi-romantic enthusiasm for a reconciliation with the Soviet Union."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Karsten Voigt explained that he felt that any arrangements with the Soviets should contain specific arrangements regarding tanks. He expressed that although he worked towards the elimination of chemical and nuclear weapons, he always stressed that the tank issue was of vital importance. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>60</sup>Reimund Seidelmann, "Die Vereinbarung zwischen SPD und SED zur Schaffung einer chemiewaffenfreien Zone. Eine politische Bewertung," *Deutschland Archiv*, No. 9, 1985, pp. 935-948; see chapter four for details.

<sup>61</sup>Werner Kaltefleiter, "German Foreign Policy: The Domestic Political Framework," in William E. Griffith, et al., *Security Perspectives of the West German Left: The SPD and the Greens in Opposition*, 1988, p. 36.

In the mid-1980s, the chairman of the party's Commission on Basic Values, Erhard Eppler, was leading an extensive exercise to rewrite the party's basic program, for after a quarter-century the Godesberg program was believed to be in need of fundamental revision.<sup>62</sup> Much of this revision concerned issues not directly connected with East-West relations; however, Eppler's main argument was expressed in a key commandment which directly related to the impact that "common security" had within the SPD. That commandment read: nothing is more important than peace. All other values and aspirations had to be subordinated to this. When Karl Kaiser criticized the seeming blindness of many of his fellow Social Democrats to violations of human rights in Eastern Europe, by contrast with their extreme alertness to such violations in, say, Central America, Egon Bahr charged Kaiser with "lifting ideology on to the same level as peace."<sup>63</sup> The Social Democrats' new thinking demanded a "de-ideologization" of East-West relations, a notion eagerly taken up in new Soviet thinking. This demand was itself, of course, highly ideological. The ideology of de-ideologization maintained that all the traditional differences of principles and values between West and East should be subordinated to the requirements of peace. The authorized version of the new mantra, incorporated into the Social Democrats' "government program 1987-1990," ran: "Peace is not everything, but without peace everything is nothing."<sup>64</sup>

In the "government program 1987-1990," prepared for the 1987 federal election, the chapter on foreign policy was headed "securing peace." It stated the time had come to "break the madness of the recently accelerated arms race and begin a 'second phase' of *détente* policy." This should include four elements: nuclear and chemical-weapon disarmament in Europe, the stabilization of conventional forces at a lower level, increased economic ties between Eastern and Western Europe, and the promotion of cultural exchange to enhance the cultural identity of Europe. The "community of responsibility" between the two German states had a special part to play in developing this. These elements, which related to Bahr's notion of "common security," were expressed through the contacts between the SPD and SED. For the purposes of this work, they will be detailed in the next chapter.

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<sup>62</sup>For this see chapter two.

<sup>63</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 317.

<sup>64</sup>*Protokoll vom Wahlparteitag der SPD in Offenburg 25. Oktober 1986*, 1986, pp. 107-154, p. 318. This phrase is associated today with Egon Bahr; however, Bahr let it be known that it was Willy Brandt who developed this phrase in relation to the new security concerns which both he and Bahr addressed. Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

Common security likewise intensified the left's anti-national sentiments. They saw interdependence as a permanent feature of international relations which left nation-states without political and economic functions. In particular, global problems, like ecology, which could not be solved by nations acting alone, were more important than nations.<sup>65</sup> It was not only the party's left that had been analyzing changes since the 1970s. Much like Foreign Minister Genscher, Lafontaine came to realize that economic integration and cross-border questions had made the classic states dysfunctional.<sup>66</sup> National political instruments were not enough to ensure political, economic, social and military security. It was only national nostalgia which trailed the already existing quality of integration.<sup>67</sup>

This line of thinking was rooted both in debates about "common security" itself, reflecting the security dilemma of the nuclear age, and in the broader issues that had been raised by various movements, protest groups and regional initiatives. The so-called New Social Movements of the 1970s, which culminated a decade later in various interconnected coalitions between parties and social groupings, had exposed the interrelation of different issues. Progress as it had been defined at the time of the *Godesberger Programm* (1959) was questioned for the dubious results it had produced. "The ability of our civilization to survive" was regarded as a much more pertinent question than specifically German aspirations.<sup>68</sup> For most SPD politicians, sovereignty was no longer realistic or desirable.<sup>69</sup> The age of global interdependence had made national rivalries an anachronism.

Bahr's national policy was related not to a vision of political autonomy but of mutually assured security. Analyzing deterrence's intrinsic logic and the drift towards integration, he developed in the 1980s the SPD's reformist realism i.e. "common security." Unlike other proponents of alternatives to the arms race he remained within the realm of *Realpolitik*, where law is determined by power,

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<sup>65</sup>Ingo Arend, "Lebenslüge Wiedervereinigung," *Juso-AG-Rundschreiben*, August 1989, p. 18.

<sup>66</sup>Oskar Lafontaine, *Deutsche Wahrheiten: Die nationale und die soziale Frage*, Hamburg, 1990, p. 89.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>68</sup>Walter, Momper, "Grußwort des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin beim Programm-Parteitag," Presseservice der SPD, Berlin, 18 December 1989, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup>Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, "Eine Warnung vor Entkoppelung: Zur notwendigen Verknüpfung von deutscher und europäischer Einigung," Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst, 13 February 1990.

while intending to transcend this very state of affairs. "We need a world where this is replaced by the power of law,"<sup>70</sup> Social movements, for Bahr, were seen as driving forces, yet they could not be trusted to improve international security. Populism would merely create instabilities.<sup>71</sup>

Before 1989, Bahr had defined Germany's interests in terms of the country's geographical position in the middle of Europe.<sup>72</sup> If the Federal Republic was to take on more responsibility in international relations it must become an "activist for a European identity."<sup>73</sup> Germany should oppose anything which could hinder the growth of interdependence in any part of the continent. Unlike the CDU's right wing, Bahr interpreted "normality" of a unified Germany not as a zero-sum power game but in terms of the creation of a new equilibrium. Much like other realists he wanted a balance of power; however, he had long since adopted a systemic rather than a narrow nationalist view;<sup>74</sup> if the balance was to be truly stable it must be mutually acceptable rather than dominated by one side.

A national role of course would be overarched by a system of "common security" in Europe.<sup>75</sup> Clearly within the SPD consensus concerning civilizing conflicts, this order was to be based on inter-state cooperation within the CSCE framework. The European Community would be its gravitational center. Concentric circles of membership, association and regulated cooperation were to be built around Brussels.<sup>76</sup> The United States' military presence was regarded as a disadvantage because of Washington's global interests.<sup>77</sup>

While Bahr perpetuated Germany's regional orientation, he nevertheless acknowledged out-of-area responsibilities. Brandt, Bahr and others emphasized

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<sup>70</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bei einer Zeitenwende kann niemand sagen: weiter wie bisher," Interview with Egon Bahr in *Neues Deutschland*, 18-19 January 1992.

<sup>71</sup>Gunter Hofmann and Gerhard Spörl, "Ich weiß gar nicht, wieviel Zeit wir haben," Interview with Egon Bahr in *Die Zeit*, 9 February 1990.

<sup>72</sup>Egon Bahr, "Verantwortung heißt, notfalls auch nein sagen, Rede in der Evangelischen Akademie Tutzing, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 2 July 1991.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Egon Bahr, "Bei einer Zeitenwende kann niemand sagen: weiter wie bisher," Interview with Egon Bahr in *Neues Deutschland*, 18-19 January 1992.

<sup>76</sup>Egon Bahr, "Aussöhnung statt Recht," Interview with Egon Bahr in *Freitag*, 6 December 1991.

<sup>77</sup>Egon Bahr in Stephan Wehowsky, "Abmarsh in Richtung Sonderweg?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20 June 1991.



that Germany had joined the United Nations with no pre-conditions whatsoever.<sup>78</sup> Therefore the country's Basic Law would have to be amended in order to allow the *Bundeswehr* to participate fully in military operations.<sup>79</sup> While some in the SPD ventured as far as to suggest new functions for German troops, Brandt and Bahr insisted on the multilateral basis of the United Nations.

However many younger members in the SPD like Karsten Voigt, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul and former FDP member Günter Verheugen adopted a more pragmatic line, incorporating both realist and idealist elements. Like other representatives in the SPD, they emphasized a broad definition of security, mainly concerned with global problems. Yet similar to Bahr, their security ideas were formulated by ideas of "common security." Walter Kolbow talked about an "international understanding of security."<sup>80</sup> They did not share traditional realist notions of egocentric security. They thought in terms of systems and the main risk was seen as the renationalization of international politics.<sup>81</sup> Peace in Europe was their prime directive, as it had been before the events of 1989.

While wanting to reduce the *Bundeswehr* to 100,000 within three years, the overall aim was to create a system of "common security."<sup>82</sup> It was emphasized that this would not be restricted to the European continent; the UN should be transformed into a global security order.<sup>83</sup> Many within the SPD rejected what they saw as attempts to protect the interests of industrialized countries using military means. As opposed to a policy of military intervention they proposed a "development alliance against the international relations of exploitation."<sup>84</sup> Unlike older SPD representatives, they insisted that reorganizing the institutional framework would not be enough to solve transnational problems; the solution would lie in the reforming of industrial societies. "Power-political or economic

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<sup>78</sup>Egon Bahr in *Westfälische Rundschau*, 25 April 1991.

<sup>79</sup>Egon Bahr in *Die Tageszeitung*, 25 March 1991. However, this did not occur until the decision of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* of 12 July 1994; see *Bundesverfassungsgericht Entscheidungen*, vol. 90, p. 286.

<sup>80</sup>Walter Kolbow (MdB), "Rede vor dem Deutschen Bundestag," 12. Wahlperiode, 70. Sitzung, 16 January 1992, p. 5881.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>*Frankfurter Kreis*, 5 March 1991, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup>Horst Peter, "Die Position der SPD-Linken zur 'Blauhelmdebatte,'" *Die Tageszeitung*, 25 May 1991.

interests," Katrin Fuchs claimed, had always been the cause of wars.<sup>85</sup> They criticized not only the military form of power politics but also its economic substance. Theirs was a fundamentalist position of opposing war as a political and economic instrument. Similar to most SPD politicians, the prevention of war was the main concern. They did not intend simply to establish peaceful crisis management but also ways to prevent violent conflicts. Nuclear weapons, especially, were seen as entirely out of proportion in relation to present challenges.

### "Common Security" in Review

Social Democrats had quietly buried the German question in all but the occasional rhetoric. They had accepted post-World War II realities and devised their strategy of *détente*, "common security," disarmament and cooperation accordingly. Therefore, the sudden end of Yalta history came to them as a shock. It left them unprepared for the consequences of their own achievement. While *Ostpolitik* was one among many preconditions for Gorbachev's politics, the shrinking of Soviet power was unforeseen. Social Democrats had hoped to see the blocs disappear in an evolutionary process rather than by revolutionary upheavals. Moreover, the SPD did not assume that the blocs would disappear as they did in such an asymmetric fashion as was the case.<sup>86</sup> Five weeks after the Wall had come down the Mayor of West Berlin defended the policy of dialogue by saying: "That also applies to the SED, which is now going through a difficult process of reforms."<sup>87</sup> For him as well as for many others on the left of Germany's political spectrum, the

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<sup>85</sup>Katrin Fuchs in *Vorwärts*, January 1991.

<sup>86</sup>However, in sharp contrast to state-oriented Social Democrats like Egon Bahr, Gert Weisskirchen and Herman Scheer saw the revolutions in Eastern Europe as a revolt from below - a question of popular self-determination. See Gert Weisskirchen, "Wo ist unsere Antwort auf die Revolution im Osten Europas?," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 30 November 1989. Moreover, they were not quite as surprised at the strength of the dissident movements, even though they certainly shared the astonishment at their sudden success. These members in the SPD had been in regular contact with opposition groups in the East, sharing their "critique of an hypertrophic statism." Unlike Bahr, Weisskirchen and others did not put their hopes on official *Ostpolitik* and *détente* alone. They focused on the evolution of civil societies. Their aim, before and after 1989, was the creation of a European society of citizens based on transnational movements. They understood networking as interconnecting democratic and social groups across state boundaries rather than linking official agencies. Disarmament, especially of nuclear weapons, was a principal precondition for permanent non-violence in and outside Europe. See also Gert Weisskirchen, "Wenn die Kritiker den sowjetischen Staat umbauen ...," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 May 1991.

<sup>87</sup>Walter, Momper, "Grußwort des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin beim Programm-Parteitag," Presseservice der SPD, Berlin, 18 December 1989, p. 3.

speed of change in East-West relations had dramatically increased. *Rapprochement* was becoming a reality but the paradigmatic change was not understood. It dawned on them some months later when the Conservatives won an overwhelming majority in the East German elections of 18 March 1990. The national question did not seem to be quite ready for burial yet.

Notwithstanding the fact that a general critique of the SPD's policies will be covered in chapter six, it would be useful here to briefly discuss and analyze the impact of "common security" in relation to the SPD and the events surrounding 1989 and 1990. There has been significant analysis of the notion of "common security" in Germany and throughout Europe. Opponents of "common security" argue that it was the policy of NATO, in particular its nuclear policies, that brought about the end of Communism in the East. Moreover, it has been argued that if "common security" had indeed been implemented in the early 1980s by the SPD, it might have impeded the events of 1989-91. Proponents contend that "common security" evolved out of a conviction that decreasing the extent of nuclear competition between the superpowers would lead to intensified competition in political, economic and social fields; an ideological competition that was a particular disadvantage to the Soviet bloc. Furthermore, Egon Bahr asserted that ideological differences between both camps had their roots in philosophies and convictions which could not be reduced to a common denominator, and in respect of which no form of convergence was to be expected.

This is not to say that differences among nations should be expected to disappear - given the ideological differences between East and West no meaningful convergence can be expected. It means that nations must come to understand that the maintenance of world peace must be given a higher priority than the assertion of their own ideological or political positions.<sup>88</sup>

The notion of "common security" implied that ideological differences could not be overthrown, and "common security" was thus needed as a military element of *détente*. Thus it was argued that the dispute over philosophies and convictions would become more, and not less, intense.

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<sup>88</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 7-8.

The Commission argued that all states had a right to security. In the absence of a world authority with the right and power to police international relations, states had to protect themselves. When they could show mutual restraint and proper appreciation of the realities of the nuclear age, the pursuit of security could cause intensified competition and more tense political relations and, at the end of the day, a reduction in security for all concerned.<sup>89</sup>

Bahr believed that increased freedom in a Europe without nuclear weapons (the goal of "common security") would increase political and economic choices. This highly idealistic view was challenged by many who felt that such a goal was impossible to reach. Moreover, Bahr's notion was challenged by others, like Timothy Garton Ash, on moral grounds. Ash argued that Bahr's view was a

comprehensive relativization of traditional Western values in the name of the supreme requirement of peace [and] if one looks at the official foreign policy resolutions of successive party conferences, and the two self-styled "government programs" of 1983 and 1987, then it is very clear that the trend was towards the increasing acceptance of this loose bundle of goals, mottoes, values and specific proposals. In the "government program" of 1983, after chapters on "social peace" and "peace with nature," the chapter on foreign policy was headed "we want peace." "Humankind," it modestly began, "wants peace. The highest goal of our whole policy is the preservation of peace." The SPD, it went on, "has never led Germany into a war." (Had the Christian or Free Democrats?).<sup>90</sup> It then reaffirmed the central importance of the Atlantic Alliance, although stressing the need for the Federal Republic to represent its own special interests within the alliance. ("In the German interest" was one of the party's 1983 election slogans.) The chapter went on to demand negotiations "with the goal of a Security Partnership."<sup>91</sup>

Stephen Szabo notes that there is a certain contradiction in Bahr's view of "common security" which argues that nuclear deterrence is the reason that cooperative structures are necessary and that war can no longer be an instrument of policy, yet which moves to weaken if not eliminate nuclear deterrence in Europe.<sup>92</sup> Ash also notes that when Bahr was asked early in 1990 "you expected

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>90</sup>It should be noted, however, that the SPD was the only party out of the three in existence at the time. For a review of the SPD's role in the inter-War period see S. Miller and H. Potthoff, *History of the German Social Democratic Party from 1848 to the Present*, 1986.

<sup>91</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 318.

<sup>92</sup>Stephen F. Szabo, *The Changing Politics of German Security*, 1990, p. 92.



everything from the government and little from the people?" he replied, "that's right. I thought: if we first provide for security, then social and political changes will follow over there. It happened precisely the other way round."<sup>93</sup> And two years later Bahr observed:

My real mistake was, as I see now, that in the last thirty-five years I have believed: since the heart of the matter is the security question, the power question, one must make sure that wars are no longer possible. Then politics and everything else will follow. Including German unity, including the overcoming of the East-West division in Europe. That was wrong. Politics have overtaken the security question.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed Bahr's notion of "common security" influenced many international leaders, through the Palme Commission, as well as members of his own party throughout the 1980s. Moreover, Bahr along with many within his own party expanded on his security policy and attempted to put "common security" into practice through contacts and proposals with the SED. Security issues were at the heart of the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*. Specifically, the recommendations of the Palme Commission for chemical and nuclear-free zones were put forward by the SPD, in opposition, with the SED in order to accomplish the goals of "common security" as well as to demonstrate to the electorate that they were capable of governing in the Federal Republic. As Egon Bahr has stated, "I feel that if the Social Democrats had remained in power, we would have handled everything better, and no unnecessary problems would have emerged."<sup>95</sup> More importantly, the basic argument of "common security" that called for peaceful competition between opposing ideologies was set into motion between the SPD and SED in the "Common Paper." These proposals will be the subject of the next chapter on contacts between the SPD and SED.

Despite the fact that much criticism has been leveled against "common security" by politicians and scholars, Egon Bahr is still very proud of his concept. In an interview with the author, he gleefully expressed the formulation of "common security."

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<sup>93</sup>*Die Zeit*, 9 February 1990; noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 340.

<sup>94</sup>*Die Zeit*, 13 March 1992, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 340.

<sup>95</sup>Egon Bahr in, *What Can Europe Do?: A Soviet-West German Discussion in Moscow*, 1987, p. 10.

And when I had arrived at this point and had written it down as well, I was almost shocked about the result; and I thought, "let's put it in the drawer for three months." Then I took it out again and looked whether I could find a mistake in it. No, there wasn't. Then I sent [the draft] to [the famous and highly respected German nuclear scientist and philosopher] Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, because he has an incorruptible brain; and then I asked him what he thought about it. And he replied and said, the only mistake he saw with it was that he himself did not see it first.

### *Annexe on Meetings of the Palme Commission*<sup>96</sup>

The first meeting was held in Vienna, Austria, on 11-12 September 1980. This meeting discussed the composition of the Commission, the terms of reference and the work program, as well as financial and organizational matters. The second meeting took place in Vienna on 13-14 December 1980. The Commission met with Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and other high ranking Austrian officials and politicians. At this meeting, the Commission's terms of reference were adopted. The second meeting discussed the work program in detail, and decided on studies to be made. The Commission decided how to organize its work including how to keep in contact with non-governmental organizations.

The third meeting was held also in Vienna, on 7-8 February 1981. The meeting discussed the SALT process and issued a paper with the title "The SALT Process: The Global Stakes." The third meeting also discussed the Vienna Force Reductions Negotiations, after introductions by representatives from the two sides at these talks, Ambassador E. Jung from the Federal Republic of Germany and Ambassador T. Strulak from Poland. Finally, this meeting also dealt with the medical effects of a nuclear exchange. A report on this subject was given to the Commission by Dr. Howard Hiatt, Dean of the School of Public Health of Harvard University. The fourth meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 25-26 April 1981. The first subject discussed was the Long Range Theater Nuclear Forces, after an introduction by P. Lellouche from the French Institute for Foreign Relations (IFRI) and M. Milstein. The Commission issued a statement on this subject. Other items discussed included the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, where the Commission heard statements by the Soviet and United Kingdom ambassadors in Geneva, Ambassador Issraelean and Ambassador Summerhayes. Professor Lawrence Freedman and John Simpson (United Kingdom) introduced a paper on this subject. Finally, the meeting dealt with research and development in the military field and new military technology. The Commission heard Bertrand Goldschmidt, France, tell about how the French decision to acquire a nuclear bomb was taken. The subject was also introduced by Bhupendra Jasani (India) and Robert Hunter (USA) who had written papers for the Commission.

The fifth meeting took place in Moscow upon the invitation of the Soviet government, on 12-14 June 1981. The Chairman of the Commission met for discussions with the General Secretary of the Communist Party, President Leonid

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<sup>96</sup>Palme Commission section entitled "Meetings" in the Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 188-190.

Brezhnev, and members of the Commission had high-level contacts with Soviet officials. The first subject on the agenda for the meeting was ballistic missile defense systems and the ABM Treaty, and it was introduced by Jack Ruina from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and by Mikhail Milstein, one of the Commission's scientific advisers. The second subject was introduced by Barry M. Blechman from the Carnegie Endowment (USA) and by Andrzej Karkoszka from the Polish Institute of International Relations in Warsaw. During the plenary meeting, the Commission discussed disarmament and security issues with representatives of the Soviet government, First Deputy Foreign Minister G. Kornienko and First Deputy Chief of General Staff, General S. Akhrameev. Furthermore, the Commission continued its discussion of medical effects of a nuclear war, this time after an introduction by Professor E. Chazov (USSR). At the end of the meeting, the Commission adopted a statement, urging the Soviet Union and the United States to preserve the ABM Treaty. On 13-18 September 1981, the sixth meeting was held in Mexico City, upon the invitation of the Mexican government. The Chairman met with Mexican President Lopez Portillo, and the Commission was received by Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda. This was the longest of the Commission's meetings, and it covered many subjects: security issues in the Third World (introduction by Swadesh Rana from India), conventional arms Transfers (introduced by Barry M. Blechman), nuclear proliferation (introduced by P. Lellouche), nuclear-weapon-free zones (introduced by Raimo Vayrynen from Finland), armament and economics (introductory remarks by Wassily Leontief, USA), and military doctrines (introduced by R. Hunter and M. Milstein). A statement about nuclear-weapon-free zones and arms transfers was adopted by the Commission. At this meeting the Commission started to discuss drafts for its final report.

In August the Chairman met with French President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy to inform them about the Commission. President Mitterrand invited the Commission to hold its seventh meeting in Paris, France, on 23-25 October 1981 which dealt primarily with economic aspects of military spending. Inga Thorsson presented the report of a UN group of experts on the subject of disarmament and development. A statement by the US Under-Secretary of State for European Affairs, Lawrence Eagleburger, about United States arms control policy was read to the Commission by the US Chargé d'affaires in Paris, Christian Chapman. Emma Rothschild and Lester Thurow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology introduced a discussion about armaments and economics. The eighth meeting was held in Tokyo on 4-6 December 1981, upon the invitation of a number of Japanese organizations. The Chairman met Prime Minister Suzuki, Foreign Minister Saktuauchi, and other politicians from Japan and the region. The subjects discussed at the Tokyo meeting included European security problems, possible ways to enhance security in the Third World, and the economic effects of military spending. A press statement was adopted at the end of the meeting. After this meeting, several of the members of the Commission joined Asian politicians, scientists, and other experts in a workshop on disarmament and security issues, with one day's session in Tokyo and- another in Hiroshima. This workshop dealt with questions of security in the Asian region. In Hiroshima, the workshop discussed effects of atomic bombings with experts, representatives of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and survivors from the bombings in 1945, and also visited the Memorial Museum.

On 22-24 January 1982, the ninth meeting took place in Schloss Gymnich, outside Bonn, upon the invitation of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

One subject on the agenda here was the question of chemical weapons, which was discussed after an introduction by Julian Perry Robinson of Sussex University (United Kingdom). Members of the Commission met privately with members of the Federal Government. The tenth meeting was held on 19-21 February 1982, in Mount Kisco, New York. United Nations Under-Secretary General for Special Political Affairs Brian Urquhart was invited to this meeting to talk about peacekeeping operations. Eugene Rostow, head of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, gave a presentation of the US administration's view on the questions of disarmament and security. Immediately before the meeting the Chairman met with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Senor Javier Perez de Cuellar. At the end of the meeting the Chairman and some members participated in a meeting in Boston with US scientists. For its eleventh meeting, the Commission was invited by the British government to Ditchley Park outside Oxford, on 19-22 March 1982. The twelfth meeting was held in Stockholm on 23-25 April 1982, upon the invitation of the Swedish government. Both these meetings dealt exclusively with the final report which was adopted in Stockholm on 25 April 1982.



### *The SPD-SED Contacts*

This chapter will explore the relationship between the Social Democrats and the ruling East German government during the 1980s. Specifically, this chapter examines the three joint proposals between the SPD's Basic Values Commission and the SED's Academy of Social Sciences and the negotiations surrounding them (known as the "Common Dialogue").<sup>1</sup> The "Common Dialogue" was an attempt by the SPD to satisfy four key Social Democratic aspirations: (i) to integrate the party under a "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*; (ii) to demonstrate to the West German electorate that it could continue the inter-German dialogue better than the Kohl government;<sup>2</sup> (iii) to lead by example in order to bring the two German governments and the superpowers (as a feeling of new Cold-War set in) closer together and reach agreements on armaments in central Europe; and (iv) to employ the concept "common security" between the two Germanies in the context of a peaceful "ideological dispute" inspired by Egon Bahr and a genuine concern for peace.

The three SPD-SED joint publications relate to two diverse issues. The first two proposals relating to a chemical and nuclear-free zones respectively concentrate on the elimination of armaments in accordance with the recommendations of the Palme Commission; however, the third joint publication or "Common Paper" relates to creating a "culture of dispute" in which a discussion regarding the systems of East and West could be conducted without the threat of war. Both of these issues were influenced by Egon Bahr and relate to his work in the Palme Commission and his notion of "common security" (see chapter three for details). Indeed, it was the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*, through the influence of Bahr and younger members within the SPD such as Karsten Voigt and Thomas Meyer,

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<sup>1</sup>The term "Common Dialogue" should not be confused with the term "Common Paper." The former relates to all three of the SPD-SED proposals, whereas the latter relates to the joint publication of 1987 sometimes referred to as the "Ideology Paper" or "Culture of Dispute Paper" (*Streitkulturpapier*), and the third of these proposals. These terms were formulated by this author during an interview with Ann Phillips, author of *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue*, 1989. She agreed that, although the terms might be difficult to follow, they best express the differences between the two. Interview with Ann Phillips, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>2</sup>See Willy Brandt's statements in *Die Welt*, 14 April 1986.

which attempted to put into practice Bahr's security concepts through an intensive relationship with the SED.<sup>3</sup>

The final section of this chapter will examine the debate within the SPD as well as the stark opposition from the Union parties and scholars regarding the SPD's contacts with the SED. Specifically, the critique will center around the "Common Paper" and the supportive positions within the SPD as well as the opposing views expressed by right-wing SPD members and its political opposition. Notably, this chapter will concentrate on the years from 1984 until 1987. Indeed the debate relating to the SPD contacts intensified with the fall of the GDR; however, this chapter will attempt to analyze the debate prior to the events of 1989 and 1990. Moreover, it is useful to compare the debate surrounding the contacts prior to, and following the collapse of the GDR. Chapters five and six will concentrate on the post-Wall impact of the contacts: this chapter will examine the contacts precisely as they occurred.<sup>4</sup>

### **The SPD-SED Proposals: 1984-1987**

In championing his view of "common security," Egon Bahr and his supporters argued that because Article 5 of the Basic Treaty<sup>5</sup> specified that the two German states could "contribute to security and cooperation in Europe" this justified their claims that they were not advocating anything that had not been previously envisioned in the days of Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.<sup>6</sup> The SPD moved to raise the level

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<sup>3</sup>Voigt explained that the joint proposals "all related back to the twin-track decision" in which there was an increase in arms control and a hope for reform from within the GDR. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Meyer expressed that the 1960s "ignored ideology for cooperation;" the 1970s "only saw their own interests and concentrated on Western values;" and he stressed that the 1980s concentrated on ideology, European values and "democracy." Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

<sup>5</sup>For a general review of the Basic Treaty, see chapter one; for an in-depth review, see Joachim Nawrocki, *Relations Between the Two States in Germany*, 1986; and Wilhelm Bruns, *Deutsch-deutsche Beziehungen*, 1982; and for legal analysis see Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, pp. 390-405, *passim*, for analysis of Article 5 see p. 404.

<sup>6</sup>A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 158. McAdams notes that Egon Bahr claimed authorship of Article 5; yet, he also states that all of the East and West German officials with whom he talked stated that it was proposed by the GDR. Bahr's assertion was reiterated in an interview with the author. However, although McAdams expresses doubt regarding Bahr's influence, it was indeed in line with his thinking during 1972, as chapters one and three demonstrate.

of dialogue between the Germanies in part thanks to the SED's subtle encouragement,<sup>7</sup> that such discussions might provide a useful vehicle for the SPD to regain its leading role in the handling of the national question. Thus when the Social Democrats fell from power, a new situation arose, and on 2 November 1982, the East German *Politbüro* minutes recorded a formal resolution: "The request of the chairman of the board (*Parteivorstand*) of the SPD, Willy Brandt, to establish party-to-party relations between the SPD and the SED will be granted."<sup>8</sup> The director of the Central Committee's Academy of Social Sciences, Otto Reinhold, was charged with establishing the links.<sup>9</sup>

To older generations on both sides, these initiatives were quite troubling. Ever since the great schism in the German left in 1918, Communists and Social Democrats had been bitterly opposed.<sup>10</sup> In the early 1930s the Communists described the Social Democrats as "social fascists." Timothy Garton Ash noted that the division was so deep that even in Hitler's jails a Communist would tap furious polemics through the wall to the Social Democrat in the neighboring cell.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, many leftists from the generation of Willy Brandt and Erich Honecker held this fatal split to have been partly responsible for Hitler's conquest. Yet, for many within the SPD, these links were especially poignant in view of the deep ideological divisions that had separated the two parties ever since the SPD in the East was forced to merge with the KPD in 1946.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>A Soviet Report to the East German Party leadership on Brandt's meeting with Gorbachev in May 1985 confirmed their increased contacts with the SPD as useful "as well as the possibility of actively involving the Social Democrats in the broad front of the struggle for preserving peace and banishing the danger of a new world war," in the report "Information" of 6 June 1985 in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/65.

<sup>8</sup>*Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: JIV 2/2/1972, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 322.

<sup>9</sup>The Central Committee Archives state that the "representative" links with the SPD would fall to Hermann Axen, presumably with Egon Bahr; and the link to the SPD's Basic Values Commission would be Otto Reinhold. See Protocol no. 22/84 of the *Politbüro* of the SED from 29 May 1984, Appendix no. 4, in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: JIV 2/2/2057.

<sup>10</sup>See Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism*, 1972.

<sup>11</sup>Axel Eggebrecht *Der halbe Weg. Zwischenbilanz einer Epoche*, 1975, p. 273, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 320.

<sup>12</sup>After 1945, the Russians allowed the initial formation of political parties in its East zone. In Berlin Otto Grotewohl organized a Social Democratic central committee for the East zone and by September the party claimed 400,000 members. Yet Grotewohl called for fusion of the SPD and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), in a united front with all anti-Fascist parties. Kurt Schumacher (leader of the SPD in the West, see chapter one) opposed this fusion as a tool of Soviet policy. On 8 February 1946, Kurt Schumacher met with Grotewohl in the Soviet-occupied

In opposition the SPD began a series of working consultations with the SED, motivated by their bitter election defeat by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in March 1983. Ignited by the breakdown of the US-Soviet Geneva arms control talks in November 1983, strong Social Democratic suspicions of the Reagan administration as excessively militant toward the Soviet Union, and a sincere commitment by the Social Democrats to an active relationship with the GDR, the SPD went on the offensive. Surprised and disgruntled by the swiftness and energy with which the Kohl government had taken up the inter-German relationship, namely *Ostpolitik*, pioneered by the Social Democrats under Chancellors Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, the Social Democrats wanted to show they could go a step further than the Christian Democrats, especially in the area of foreign policy. The Social Democrats also wanted to exploit strong anti-chemical and anti-nuclear sentiment in the FRG. Most of all, they were motivated by a desire to get the arms control process moving again after the INF breakdown.

In April 1983, the party's governing board took the controversial step of sending an official representative (although not Willy Brandt, as the SED had hoped) to an international conference of Communist and Socialist parties in East Berlin on the legacy of Karl Marx and its relevance to current world tensions. Then, in August 1983, Bahr met with Honecker and Hermann Axen, his counterpart in the SED, to set up the first of what were to be regular working groups with the SED on ways the two parties could help to reduce the level of confrontation between the blocs. Finally, by the end of the year, the SPD and the SED had agreed to sponsor a series of discussions between a specially constituted Social Democratic commission, essentially the Basic Values Commission (*Grundwertekommission*), and the East German Academy for Social Sciences on the subject of common social and political values.

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zone of Germany for the last time. Grotewohl was under pressure from the Soviet authorities to bring the SPD into a united-front party with the Communist party. Schumacher suggested dissolving the SPD in the East sector to forestall a forced union with the communists. Grotewohl refused and in April 1946, Grotewohl acceded to pressure from Moscow for fusion of the SPD and the KPD in the Soviet zone. He became the first chairman of the Socialist Unity Party (SED). See Diane Rosolowsky, *West Germany's Foreign Policy: The Impact of Social Democrats and the Greens*, 1987, p. 14-15.



When he became leader of the Social Democratic parliamentary party in 1983, Hans-Jochen Vogel took over contacts with Erich Honecker from the old ex-Communist, Herbert Wehner.<sup>13</sup> In Vogel's case, this took the form of an annual meeting with Honecker, in East Berlin or in the Hubertusstock hunting lodge. At their second such meeting, in March 1984, the two leaders agreed to set up a joint working-group on the subject of a chemical-weapon-free zone.<sup>14</sup> The Soviet Union was consulted by the SED and agreed to the project.<sup>15</sup> The most prominent members of the working group were Egon Bahr and Hermann Axen, a member of the SED *Politbüro*.<sup>16</sup> The Soviet party leadership noted in October 1984 that many arguments that had previously been presented by the Soviets to the representatives of the SPD had been taken over by them.<sup>17</sup> This was especially apparent in the remarks by the two key negotiators of the SPD, Egon Bahr and Karsten Voigt, representing the old and new generations respectively. Yet, Bahr and Voigt maintained that after 1985 it was Soviet representatives who took over many of their ideas on security policy.<sup>18</sup>

### Chemical-Weapons-Free Zone

The world may be on the brink of a major new arms race in chemical weaponry. The Commission considers chemical weapons particularly abhorrent, and condemns any use of such inhumane weapons. ... The Commission calls for the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe, beginning with Central Europe. The agreement would include a declaration of the whereabouts of existing depots and stockpiles in Europe, adequate means to verify their destruction, and procedures for monitoring compliance on a continuing basis, including a few on-site

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<sup>13</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 322.

<sup>14</sup>Ash notes that at a meeting on 29 May 1984, after discussing a report by Herbert Häber on the SPD's Essen congress, the *Politbüro* formally announced the establishment of a chemical weapons group with the SPD; point 5 and Appendix 4, of "Protocal 22-84" in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED: JIV 2/2/2057*, noted in op. cit., p. 322.

<sup>15</sup>The SED had obtained permission in dealing with the SPD on this issue in July 1984 from Boris Nikolajewitsch, Soviet *Politbüro* member, see *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED: IV 2/2.035/78*.

<sup>16</sup>However, Voigt stated that the two papers involved two different groups and although Egon Bahr was the prominent SPD leader associated with both, Voigt claimed that he dealt with the details in the chemical weapons paper and Bahr with the nuclear weapons paper. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>17</sup>Soviet Memorandum of 15 October 1984 in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED: IV 2/2.035/65*, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 320.

<sup>18</sup>Interviews with Karsten Voigt and Egon Bahr, Bonn, 15 and 17 February (respectively) 1995. This point is also brought forward in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 320.

inspections on a challenge basis. The training of troops in the offensive use of chemical weapons also would be prohibited.<sup>19</sup>

In June 1985, the SPD-SED working group reported that consensus had been reached on a framework agreement for eliminating chemical weapons from the territory of the FRG, the Benelux countries, the GDR, Poland and Czechoslovakia (the countries whose territories comprised the reduction area used in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions talks). The participating states would obligate themselves neither to produce nor obtain chemical weapons, nor to permit their stationing or transit in their territory. States possessing chemical weapons would commit themselves to respect the zone. The framework agreement contained provision for obligatory on-site inspection by an international commission. However, this commission lacked any implementing powers.

The members of the SPD-SED working group made the tactical error of presenting their work as a quasi-official framework agreement drawn up in treaty language with a preamble and provision for duration and review of the agreement.<sup>20</sup> This permitted the Kohl government with some justification to criticize the SPD for arrogating to itself negotiating authority which could be exercised only by the West German government.<sup>21</sup> The West German government and other NATO governments also criticized the framework agreement as undermining official governmental efforts to agree on a world-wide prohibition of production or storage of chemical weapons in the United Nations Disarmament Conference in Geneva. The SPD argued that their motive was to take action in Europe where the great powers had failed to act and did not appear interested in acting; to give an impulse to the Geneva talks by suggesting a workable verification system; that regional agreements were easier to achieve than world-wide ones and that once achieved, their proposal would stimulate a world-wide agreement while serving as a model for disengagement zones in Europe.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 150-151.

<sup>20</sup>It appears that the SED was very happy with their "first example" of concrete relations with the SPD. In a personal note to Axen, the "Foreign Information" office recalled that the proposal had been distributed in 13 languages and totaled 138,000 copies world-wide. See *Zentrale Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/78.

<sup>21</sup>Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup>See articles by Hermann Scheer and Karsten Voigt in *Aus Friedenssehnsucht praktische Friedenspolitik machen*, 1986.

After nearly two years of discussions about possible exchanges between SPD and SED "social scientists,"<sup>23</sup> a joint working-group composed of delegations from the Commission on Basic Values of the SPD, chaired by Erhard Eppler, and from the Academy of Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the SED, chaired by Otto Reinhold, was established in the summer of 1984. The diplomatic protocol was thus delicately pitched one degree below full, direct party-to-party talks.<sup>24</sup> At a guest-house on the Scharmützelsee, outside East Berlin, the "social scientists" began their arduous deliberations.<sup>25</sup>

Motivated by aforementioned proceedings regarding a worldwide ban on chemical weapons in Geneva, the SPD in association with the SED outlined a plan for ban of chemical weapons in Central Europe (*Mittleuropa*). The SPD delegation, led by Karsten Voigt and including Egon Bahr and Hermann Scheer, and the SED delegation, led by Hermann Axen, the Central Committee Secretary for international relations, met six times and in June 1985 produced the document, formally approved, as the Joint Communiqué.<sup>26</sup> Noted, by the Presidium of the SPD and by the *Politbüro* of the SED, it was headed "Framework for an Agreement on the Formation of a Chemical-Weapons-Free Zone in Europe." Replete with a preamble, diplomatic terminology and notes, this was nothing less than a draft treaty for a chemical-weapon-free zone in, as it put it, *Mittleuropa*. At a minimum, the zone was to include the Federal Republic, the GDR, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. (But only in April 1988 were the two German parties formally joined in this initiative by the Communist Party of

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<sup>23</sup>Erhard Eppler, *Wie Feuer und Wasser: Sind Ost und West friedensfähig?*, 1988, p. 13; East German "social scientist" Otto Reinhold was given the main responsibility for relations with the SPD in a Politbüro resolution of 2 November 1982, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 324.

<sup>24</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die Zweite Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup>Erhard Eppler, *Wie Feuer und Wasser: Sind Ost und West friedensfähig?*, 1988, p. 98; see also Carl-Christian Kaiser in *Die Zeit*, 21 August 1992; and Volker Rühle's review of Eppler's book in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 January, 1989.

<sup>26</sup>The SPD published this joint communiqué with a forward by Karsten Voigt in *Politik* 6- 1985 and in *Die Neue Gesellschaft* August 1985; the East German edition was published as "Für Chemiewaffenfreie Zone in Europa. Gemeinsame politische Initiative der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands und der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands," *Neues Deutschland*, August 1985.

Czechoslovakia.)<sup>27</sup> The working-group argued that the Joint Communiqué had been inspired by the commitment expressed in Article 5 of the Basic Treaty (negotiator: E. Bahr), and by a sense of responsibility that (once again) "no war should go out from German soil, that from German soil peace must go out."

In August 1985, Karsten Voigt highlighted in a *Die Neue Gesellschaft* article entitled "A Common Way Towards Chemical Disarmament," the method in which the SPD-SED proposed their chemical-free zone in Central Europe. It dealt with the June 1985 Joint Communiqué and spelled out the SPD position citing text from the Communiqué. Voigt stated that a 19 June 1985 press conference in Berlin resulted in a political breakthrough on disarmament. This breakthrough of the joint team consisting of representatives from the SPD *Bundestagsfraktion* and the SED, he declared, would represent a triple meaning:

"It will cross the threshold into political new lands."

"It acts as a model for real disarmament in Europe."

"It is the first time that politicians of both German states, together, in the spirit of the Basic Treaty, present such an extensive and concrete disarmament proposal."<sup>28</sup>

Voigt argued that "the agreement could and should become a core piece to a 'second phase' of *Ostpolitik*."<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Voigt maintained that the proposal supported common interests for a reduction of tensions, greater security in Europe, and was in line with the spirit of Article 5 of the Basic Treaty which stated: "The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic will foster peaceful relations between European states and will contribute to security and cooperation in Europe ... [they] will support with the goal of complete disarmament helpful efforts for further effective international control of international security, especially in the area of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (*Massenvernichtungswaffen*)."<sup>30</sup> Voigt contended that chemical weapons belonged undeniably to these weapons mentioned in the Basic Treaty. "Through the willingness for negotiations regarding chemical-weapons-

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<sup>27</sup>See SPD joint statement in the press service of the SPD, 5 April 1988, 295-1988, see also commentary by Karsten Voigt in *ibid.*, 296-1988, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 322.

<sup>28</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Gemeinsame Wege zur chemischen Abrüstung," *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, August 1985, p. 737.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 737-738.



free zones in Europe and nuclear-weapons-free zones in Central Europe, the Federal Government should agree with, not only the spirit of the Basic Treaty, but should also institute more fields of dialogue and cooperation with the GDR through questions of security and disarmament."<sup>31</sup>

The chemical-free zone proposal would encompass the Federal Republic, the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia; thus, the states that bordered the perimeter of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.<sup>32</sup> Voigt then talked about the "responsibilities" of the proposal in which the states obligated themselves not to manufacture chemical weapons, purchase such weapons, station these weapons upon their territory, or allow transport of these weapons across their territory. Moreover, and important to the analysis of the proposal, was the statement directed solely at the United States.<sup>33</sup> "The United States ... [as the only state admitting to have chemical weapons, may not] station such weapons in the zone, manufacture, as well as deliver and introduce [chemical weapons] to countries belonging to the zones."<sup>34</sup> And under the section "control" the proposal stated that every five years the zone would be enforced by agreements reached by an international committee. Furthermore, the proposal declared "the United States ... must ... withdraw their chemical weapons from the Federal Republic."<sup>35</sup>

Voigt announced that the SPD *Bundestagsfraktion* would declare its intention to petition "the Federal Government for formal negotiations with the governments of the GDR and the Soviet Union regarding the formation of a chemical-weapons-free zone in Europe." "It is then the task of the Federal Government, in dialogue with the United States, as the only alliance partner presently still storing chemical

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 738.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>For a review of the CDU's complaint that the paper was directed solely at the U.S., see Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 32.

<sup>34</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Gemeinsame Wege zur chemischen Abrüstung," *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, August 1985, p. 738.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. Up to January 1987, when General Secretary Gorbachev stated that the Soviet Union had ceased production of chemical weapons, the USSR had never publicly admitted possession of these weapons. Consequently, from the Soviet viewpoint, the SPD-SED project would be aimed only at the United States which had known chemical weapons stocks in Federal Germany and which was then engaged in a difficult effort to gain Congressional agreement to produce new binary chemical weapons. Egon Bahr expressed the dilemma in negotiating a treaty with the SED on this issue. As he stated, "our intelligence said 'yes,' the GDR said 'no' ... it was all so strange." Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

weapons on the territory of the Federal Republic, to define under which stipulations they are willing to remove these weapons."<sup>36</sup>

The proposal had a mixed reception in West Germany and failed to elicit the hoped-for public support, perhaps because the US-Soviet nuclear arms talks in Geneva had been resumed in March 1985. Karsten Voigt would later claim that indeed the paper brought increased domestic pressures on the Kohl government.<sup>37</sup> The proposal may have played a role in bringing about the informal understanding between President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl a year later in May 1986.<sup>38</sup> They concluded that the aging stock of American chemical weapons stored in Germany would be removed by 1992, when binary weapons would be ready for storage in the United States and transport to Europe in the event of crisis.

### **Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone**

*The Commission recommends the establishment of a battlefield-nuclear-weapon-free zone starting with Central Europe and extending ultimately from the northern to the southern flanks of the two alliances.* This scheme would be implemented in the context of an agreement on parity and mutual force reductions in Central Europe. No nuclear munitions would be permitted in the zone. ... The geographic definition of the zone should be determined through negotiations, taking into account the relevant circumstances in the areas involved, but for illustrative purposes, a width of 150 kilometers on both sides may be suggested. Provisions for verifying compliance with these prohibitions would be negotiated. They would have to include a limited number of on-site inspections in the zone on a challenge basis.<sup>39</sup>

Following a cordial summit meeting between Brandt and Honecker in September 1985, the working-group was authorized to explore the subject of a nuclear-

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<sup>36</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Gemeinsame Wege zur chemischen Abrüstung," *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, August 1985, p. 740.

<sup>37</sup>Voigt stated that the U.S was even considering modernizing their chemical weapons. He stated "they reached a point [in 1986] to either get rid of them or modernize...the SPD stopped them!" Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>38</sup>For this argument see Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, pp. 169-170.

<sup>39</sup>Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, pp. 147-149; Italics by Commission.

weapon-free-corridor in Europe,<sup>40</sup> "in accordance with the proposal of the Palme Commission."<sup>41</sup> The SPD-SED working group continued its work and in October 1986 reported an agreed proposal for a corridor in central Europe from which nuclear weapons would be removed. As with its proposal for a corridor free of chemical weapons, the working group was fleshing out a proposal made earlier by the Palme Commission. Egon Bahr explained that there was a genuine fear within the SPD that the process of *Ostpolitik* might be stopped by the Kohl government. Thus in a conversation with other SPD leaders who asked "what can we do about this?" Bahr responded, "it is really simple, 'a nuclear-free zone' as proposed in the Palme Commission."<sup>42</sup> The joint report, now called "Principles for a Nuclear-Free Corridor in Central Europe" rather than a framework agreement, provided for a corridor of 150 kilometers on the territory of the FRG on one side, and of the GDR and Czechoslovakia on the other, for a total width of 300 kilometers,<sup>43</sup> from which all capable delivery vehicles, including dual-capable vehicles which could deliver nuclear warheads, and all nuclear warheads, including nuclear mines, were to be removed. Verification would be by a permanent international commission which would carry out inspection within a period to be specified if grounds for previously submitted complaints had not been resolved.<sup>44</sup> The following map, taken from the Palme Commission report shows the layout for the establishment of the nuclear-weapons-free zone.

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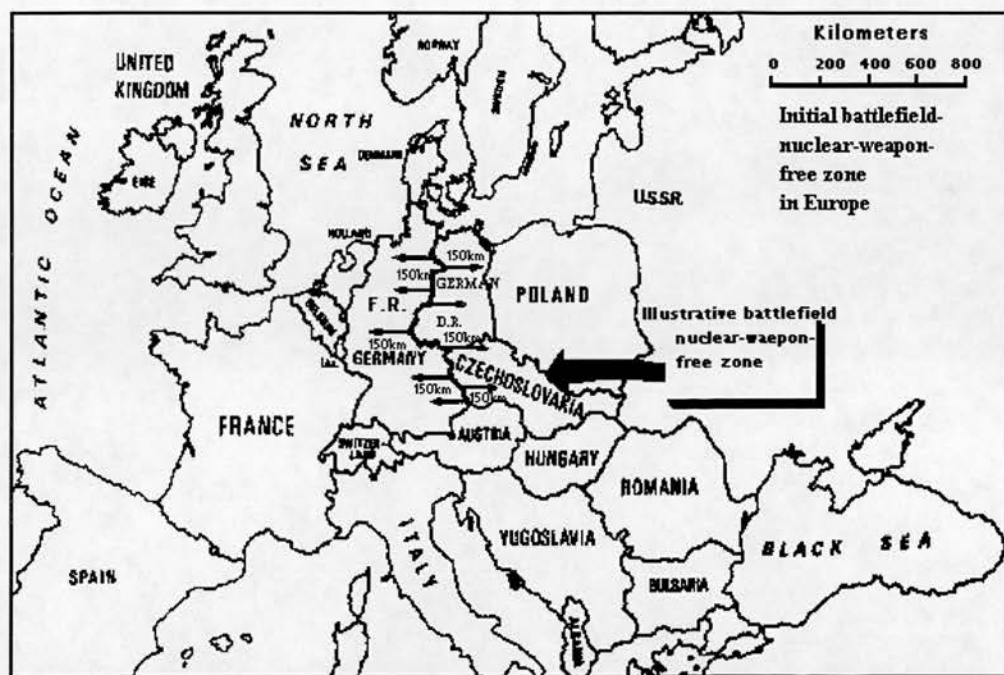
<sup>40</sup>See Politbüro meeting details of 24 September 1985 in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: JIV 2/2/2131.

<sup>41</sup>See Egon Bahr in *Politik*, 19-1986. Moreover, Bahr asserted that the zone proposals, especially the nuclear-free zone, were in accordance with the Palme Commission of 1982; yet, it was Bahr himself who espoused many of the specifics regarding these proposals. Thus it could be argued that Bahr was a master politician; able to utilize a wide range of political venues in order to achieve his goals. Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>43</sup>Karsten Voigt stated that at first the GDR wanted to go further than the Palme Commission with the number "600 kilometers." He explained that the Soviets were fixated with this issue and attempted to gain as many nuclear restrictions as possible. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>44</sup>"Pressekonferenz mit Egon Bahr und Herman Axen," SPD Bundestagsfraktion Tagesdienst, 21 October 1986.



Map from Palme Commission Report, *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament*, 1982, p. 148.

Printed in the SPD *Deutschland Archiv* as well as the SED *Neues Deutschland* was the documentation of the October 1986 paper "Principles for a Nuclear-Free Corridor in Central Europe."<sup>45</sup> On 21 October, this Joint Communiqué was adopted under the leadership of Egon Bahr and Hermann Axen.<sup>46</sup> Specifically, the members of the working group were composed of Hermann Axen, Manfred Uschner, Karl Lanius, Karl-Heinz Wagner and Günter Hillmann from the SED and Egon Bahr, Karsten Voigt, Erwin Horn, Hermann Scheer and Uwe Stehr from the SPD.

The *Deutschland Archiv* article began by recalling the meeting between Willy Brandt and Erich Honecker regarding their call for a collective team for the discussion of an nuclear-weapons-free corridor in Europe corresponding to the

<sup>45</sup>*Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, and *Neues Deutschland*, 22 October 1986.

<sup>46</sup>First mentioned in a Central Committee "Hausmitteilung" from Hermann Axen to Erich Honecker on 18 January 1985. see *Zentrales Parteiarhiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/78.



recommendation of the Palme Commission.<sup>47</sup> The article stated that there was a threat that military conflicts could escalate and breach the nuclear threshold. And if the escalation did occur the nuclear threshold would be lowered and there would be a temptation to use nuclear weapons prematurely.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Communiqué recommended that the Palme Commission proposal for a nuclear-free area 150 kilometers on both sides of the East-West border be adopted.<sup>49</sup>

The working group had six sessions examining the possibilities to realize this proposal.<sup>50</sup> The result established "an appeal to all governments in East and West which are in the intended corridor to undertake, at the earliest moment, potential negotiations regarding the creation of a nuclear-weapons-free corridor."<sup>51</sup> It was further argued that "on both sides the make-up of the conventional dispute powers and their armaments would decrease without their defense capability changing, and a move toward an "inability to attack" and military stability on a lower standard together making an essential contribution to disarmament in the conventional field."<sup>52</sup>

The joint proposal, "Principles for a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Corridor in Central Europe," was divided into eight fundamental statements:

1. "The European continent houses the highest concentration of weapons and dispute powers. The arms race will continue. Life in Europe remains and grows endangered. This fills people with deeper apprehensions."
2. A call for a step by step reduction of weapons on a lower standard (*niedriges Niveau*) for stable "common security."
3. These exclusive initiatives are an expression of a "common responsibility that arises out of the immediate concern" on both sides of Europe.
4. "The mission is to decrease the danger of an outbreak of conflict, to foster security and trust between the European states, and to promote efforts for arms

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<sup>47</sup>SPD Dokumentation, "Initiative von SPD und SED für eine atomwaffenfreie Zone in Mitteleuropa," *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 211.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Egon Bahr explained that during the first few negotiations, the GDR was demanding much more from the FRG than it would give in return and thus, as he stated, "that was quite difficult." Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>51</sup>SPD Dokumentation, "Initiative von SPD und SED für eine atomwaffenfreie Zone in Mitteleuropa," *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 211.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

control and disarmament through regional actions, and to achieve the first step on the road to worldwide abolition of nuclear-weapons."

5. "Such steps supplement the negotiations in Geneva regarding the reduction and elimination of strategic and medium-range weapons as well as the prevention of an arms race in space."

6 "By following the proposal by the 'unforgettable' Olof Palme, both sides of the dividing line between the alliances should eliminate nuclear weapons, lower the threshold of nuclear war and [avoid] the trap of [their] use that would cause uncontrollable escalation."

7. Both sides are united for creating lower standards of military power "from the Atlantic to the Urals" through quick negotiations, and effective and drastic reductions of conventional weapons by the superpowers.

8. The "initiative for the fulfillment of the nuclear-weapons-free corridor in Central Europe corresponds to the special responsibility (*Verantwortung*) of both German states to ensure that war may never again emanate from German soil, ... peace must continue."<sup>53</sup>

The communiqué went on to define nuclear weapons and talk about responsibilities of the communiqué, control principles, instruments of control, national control (governments had the main responsibility), and international control (through a commission).<sup>54</sup>

Karsten Voigt also published an article in *Deutschland Archiv* entitled "The Proposal for a nuclear-weapons-free corridor: A German-German Pilot Project for a Security Partnership within the East-West Conflict" which highlighted the vital points of the paper and its relevance to peace in Central Europe.<sup>55</sup> It began, "proposals regarding the formation of diluted zones in Europe cannot only be assessed from a military-strategic point of view but must also be assessed from a security and foreign policy point of view."<sup>56</sup> Voigt stated that the SPD-SED security partnership created a proposal with the goal towards "common security" away from antagonism. "This Social Democratic security policy has aimed to maintain and foster peace, freedom and justice. The conservation and protection of peace is a primary task."<sup>57</sup> In relation to Bahr's concept of "common security,"

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid.; the eight statements are found on pages 212-213.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 212-213.

<sup>55</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Der Vorschlag für einen nuklearwaffenfreien Korridor: Ein deutsches Pilotprojekt für eine Sicherheitspartnerschaft im Ost-West-Konflikt, *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 142.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

Voigt stated that the corridor proposal had as a goal the elimination of military power as a means for politics.<sup>58</sup>

Voigt called for a "European post-war order" (*europäische Nachkriegsordnung*).<sup>59</sup> "Despite the ongoing competition between opposing ideologies, common solutions must be sought for the goal of war prevention."<sup>60</sup> It was the aspiration of the SPD to create a peace order, in which the separation of Europe could be overcome. Voigt argued that this policy was in the interest of both systems and in addition, Voigt argued, as he did with the chemical-free zone proposal, that this policy was in the spirit of the Basic Treaty. Moreover, as with the previous proposal statement that chemical weapons were weapons of mass destruction, so he added nuclear weapons to this category. Voigt declared, "regular and comprehensive consultations between the governments of both German states ... should be part of obvious practices." "In order to reach this goal, ... intensive dialogues are necessary between the Federal Government and the GDR as well as with the remaining East European states."<sup>61</sup> Voigt stressed that the nuclear-weapons-free zone proposal was the start of future conversations between the East and West and the long-range goal of these conversations was a "structural inability to attack" (*Strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*) on both sides of the Wall. This action would stimulate the SPD's new policy of a "second phase" of *détente* (*Entspannungspolitik*).<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, Voigt professed that "the concept of a security partnership postulates a new ... thinking between states with different social orders."<sup>63</sup> Yet Voigt also stated that the dialogue between the SPD and SED was not without its risks.<sup>64</sup> However, the nuclear-free zone proposal, through its limitations on nuclear weapons, centered on "conventionalizing" the weapons in the two Germanies in order to decrease nuclear annihilation if war indeed did break out. Voigt added, "[t]he corridor contains, through its

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 143. Voigt argued that this notion dealt with the thought of ending antagonism between the blocs, ending the bi-polar system, and incorporating the CSCE process. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>60</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Der Vorschlag für einen nuklearwaffenfreien Korridor: Ein deutsch-deutsches Pilotprojekt für eine Sicherheitspartnerschaft im Ost-West-Konflikt, *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 143.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

conventional components, a first step toward the goal of mutual conventional inability for attack [as well]."<sup>65</sup> As Voigt had earlier stated in 1984:

A conventionalization of NATO's strategy should seek to achieve a defense posture adequate to deter a Warsaw Pact attack without having to rely on the threat of nuclear first-use. Both in the United States and in Europe, discussion of the possibility of nuclear wars and of the devastating effects of the use of nuclear weapons has resulted in a changed evaluation of the moral legitimacy and military utility of threatening the first use of nuclear weapons. The loss of moral legitimacy and military utility is closely interrelated. The credibility of the Western retaliatory threat suffers if it is lacking in democratic consensus; and its acceptance in democratic societies becomes fragile if deterrence comes to be perceived as inappropriate to the external threat. Conventionalizing NATO strategy would be a positive step away from military thinking in terms of nuclear warfare. ... In view of the moral crisis of legitimacy besetting the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, such an approach seems called for.<sup>66</sup>

In order to sell the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free zone, the SPD needed to justify more than just the fact that the spirit lay within Article 5 of the Basic Treaty. Thus, the proposal argued that its recommendation was in line "with the common interests of both sides of the borders of NATO and the Warsaw Pact."<sup>67</sup> The paper on a nuclear-free corridor clearly had Moscow's approval.<sup>68</sup> Whether it had Washington's was very much less clear. In his commentary, Bahr nonetheless went out of his way to argue that the proposal was entirely compatible with and indeed complementary to what had been agreed multilaterally at the Stockholm Conference on disarmament, and with the position recently taken by Ronald Reagan at his Reykjavik summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>69</sup> Yet, Bahr was not all happy with the Reykjavik summit. He stated, "everything failed because the Strategic Defense Initiative talks failed. More precisely, an agreement was possible whenever the principles of mutual security were referred to, the realization that when alone, one cannot be safer than the potential enemy, (*sic*) ...

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>66</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A German Social Democrat's Perspective," in Andrew J. Pierre and William Hyland (eds.), *Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, 1984, p. 116.

<sup>67</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Der Vorschlag für einen nuklearwaffenfreien Korridor: Ein deutsch-deutsches Pilotprojekt für eine Sicherheitspartnerschaft im Ost-West-Konflikt, *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 145.

<sup>68</sup>Egon Bahr explained that "Everything that we did in the GDR was clarified in Moscow first." Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>69</sup>Egon Bahr in *Politik*, 19-1986.



but the moment one of the parties starts to aspire to superiority over the other, i.e., to create a strategic defense system, even those arguments based on the principle of mutual security fail."<sup>70</sup>

Unlike the chemical-free zone proposal, Social Democratic participants claimed that the bulk of Warsaw Pact tactical missiles and nuclear-capable aircraft were inside the Eastern portion of the suggested zone and would have to be moved back, while no NATO missiles and few nuclear-capable aircraft were in the zone. When Warsaw Pact missiles and aircraft were moved back, US nuclear missiles deployed in the FRG would be out of range of preemptive Warsaw Pact attack, and crisis stability would be enhanced. The authors insisted that the two German states would remain participants in their respective alliances for the foreseeable future and that a separate German-German arrangement would not meet German security interests, but that the SPD-SED initiative was intended to encourage the two German governments to develop similar ideas within their respective alliances."<sup>71</sup> Bahr stated:

What is absolutely lethal for Europe, what is tantamount to the termination of Europe's existence, is a mere 4 per cent (*sic*) of the nuclear potential of the two superpowers. It is enough for us. If the nuclear weapons are eliminated from this corridor, it will be or would be easiest to do it in the form of nuclear warheads. It can be done within an hour if one chooses.<sup>72</sup>

However, all NATO governments rejected this concept on the grounds that, if implemented, it would indeed cause US nuclear weapons to be removed from FRG territory and make unworkable NATO's strategy of nuclear deterrence through flexible response. However, the proposal received continuing vigorous support from the USSR and all other members of the Warsaw Pact. But once again, the SPD-SED initiative was overtaken by new developments - rapid movement to conclude the INF Treaty and the emergence of proposals to negotiate reduction of air-launched and tactical ground-launched nuclear weapons. The impact of the joint proposal on West German and Western European opinion was

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<sup>70</sup>Egon Bahr in *Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in Europe*, International Sofia Symposium, 1986, p. 34.

<sup>71</sup>Karsten Voigt, "Der Vorschlag für einen nuklearwaffenfreien Korridor," *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987.

<sup>72</sup>Egon Bahr in *Nuclear Weapon Free Zones in Europe*, International Sofia Symposium, 1986, p. 37.

again mixed, this time mainly because the INF talks were at last showing real promise as the result of important Soviet concessions to the agreed NATO position. Furthermore, the proposal did not save the Social Democrats from a second severe election defeat to Chancellor Kohl and the Christian Democrats at the beginning of 1987.

The SPD-SED joint working group on arms control and security met again at the end of January 1987, again expressed its support for establishment of a nuclear-free corridor in Europe, and announced that it would next be submitting suggestions on how to establish mutual incapacity for offense under conditions of sufficient capacity for defense. Apparently the intention was to revive the chemical- and nuclear-free zone proposals and, by the end of 1988, to work out the details of a disengagement zone in central Europe from which all armored and air forces and missiles would be removed. The original intention here appears to have been to move into a more general discussion and endorsement of the ideas on non-provocative defense or alternative defense developed by the anti-nuclear left in the FRG and endorsed in general terms by the Gorbachev leadership during 1987. But this project was preempted by a February 1988 joint declaration from a working group composed of the FRG Social Democrats and the Communist Polish United Workers Party, also established in 1984. The SPD-PUWP declaration advocated eliminating offensive components of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces including the existing disparities and asymmetries, so that neither alliance would be able to launch a surprise attack. This objective would be carried out through radical cuts in tactical nuclear weapons, tanks, combat aircraft, tactical-range rockets and missiles, artillery, and armed helicopters.<sup>73</sup> The size and frequency of ground and air exercises was also to be restricted. The Jaruzelski government insisted to Moscow that it should be given the lead in efforts of individual Warsaw Pact states to push force reductions and confidence-building measures and Moscow agreed, braking the GDR's desire to press forward in this area. Yet, by this time the GDR had begun to expand its contacts with the SPD. No longer concentrating on specific security issues; the new dialogue between the two parties would now concentrate on creating a "culture of ideological dispute."

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<sup>73</sup>Voigt expressed regret that the nuclear-weapons proposal with the SED did not contain such specific restrictions like tanks, etc. Thus he would later claim that the proposal seems "vague." Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

## "Mitteleuropa"

Germany's geographical position in the heart of Europe was traditionally associated with a very highly developed sense of vulnerability, which led to a preoccupation with national frontiers and a marked emphasis on military power. This sense of vulnerability remained in the Federal Republic. The Federal Republic was physically at the point where the two global competitive systems met and shared a thousand-mile border with its adversary, the GDR. Its "waist," the distance between its eastern and western borders, was only 225 km at its narrowest, 480 km at its widest point. This configuration left very little room for retreat since a few initial defeats could have led to the whole territory being overrun. ... In the post-war period bipolarity excluded *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe) and successive federal governments dominated by the imperatives of security and access to markets made the Federal Republic the first German regime to be exclusively and unequivocally a Western power. This position was slightly modified by the normalization of relations with Eastern Europe through *Ostpolitik* but, despite fears to the contrary, the Federal Republic remained very firmly anchored in the West and in this sense geographical categories were superseded.<sup>74</sup>

Both the chemical and nuclear proposals would create a "Central-European Zone" (*mitteleuropäische Zone*).<sup>75</sup> This term represents much more than its translation suggests. It was in this general context that the slogan of Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*), as referred to by Paterson above, was taken up in the Social Democratic discussion. Initially revived by Czech, Hungarian and Polish intellectuals, in the debate about freedom in Eastern Europe rather than that about peace in Western Europe, the term was treated with understandable caution in Germany.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>William E. Paterson, "Gulliver Unbound: The Changing Context of Foreign Policy," in Gordon Smith, William E. Paterson, Peter H. Merkl, and Stephen Padgett (eds), *Developments in German Politics*, 1992, p. 138.

<sup>75</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Der Vorschlag für einen nuklearwaffenfreien Korridor: Ein deutsch-deutsches Pilotprojekt für eine Sicherheitspartnerschaft im Ost-West-Konflikt, *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 20, February 1987, p. 144.

<sup>76</sup>It was Friedrich Naumann, a nationalist with a social conscience, who forged in 1915 the intellectual weapon for the Central Europeanists. "*Mitteleuropa*," he called his famous book, which offered in 1915 a justification for German war aims, based on overrated German self-esteem and a propensity to dominate the center of Europe. The Germanic center of the continent ought to be as strong as possible to prevent further conflicts. The rift between Prussia and Austria in 1866 had weakened the German cause and, Naumann said, it ought to be healed. He believed that the dominant force in a post-war Europe should be a centralized, unified, powerful and hegemonic Germanic Central Europe. See Ludger Kühnhardt, "Germany and Central Europe: A Debate on an Old Subject," *German Comments*, no. 16, October 1986, p.27.

Timothy Garton Ash noted that Peter Bender had fewer reservations. "The renaissance of *Mittleuropa*," Bender wrote, "is first a protest against the division of the continent, against the hegemony of Americans and Russians, against the totalitarianism of ideologies." "In the desire for *détente*," he went on, speaking at a Social Democratic symposium on *Mittleuropa* in early 1987, "we have more in common with Belgrade and Stockholm, also with Warsaw and East Berlin, than we do with Paris and London."<sup>77</sup> Even more explicit and uninhibited was the then executive secretary of the SPD, Peter Glotz, himself born in the German part of Czechoslovakia before the war. "We must win back *Mittleuropa*," he wrote, "first as a concept, then as a reality." "Let us use the concept of *Mittleuropa*," he argued elsewhere, "as an instrument in a second phase of *détente* policy."<sup>78</sup> Going into detail, Glotz suggested a chemical-weapon-free zone embracing the Federal Republic, the GDR and Czechoslovakia; a nuclear-weapon-free corridor comprising the two German states; energy-sharing arrangements among Austria, Czechoslovakia and others; new kinds of tourist agreements; and a more intensive *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade). Along the same lines, the idea of *Mittleuropa* could be used by the SPD as a way to bring the East and the West together economically as well as politically. Central Europe, argues Agnes Heller, provides a "middle way" between western individualism and eastern collectivism. This puts stress on ideology and values, on what Central Europe has to offer the world.<sup>79</sup> This is another reason, which we shall see, for its use in the SPD's next joint proposal with the SED. However, it should be noted that not all of the members of the SPD felt the term was adequate. Karsten Voigt claimed that "the use of *Mittleuropa* as a cultural concept was nonsense." He argued that the culture in Germany was the "same as in the West." Moreover, he asserted that "economically - it made no sense; militarily - it made no sense ... but, Bahr and Glotz wanted it."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Dietrich Spangenberg (ed.), *Mittleuropa: Die blockierte Vergangenheit. Nachdenken über Mittleuropa*, 1987, pp. 87, 102-103; noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 316.

<sup>78</sup>Peter Glotz, in *Die Neue Gesellschaft*, no. 7, 1986, p. 585; noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 316.

<sup>79</sup>Agnes Heller, "The Great Republic," in Ference Fehér and Agnes Heller, *Eastern Left, Western Left*, 1987, pp. 187-200.

<sup>80</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.



For some, this term has hinted at the insufficiencies of a purely West European/European Community perspective, for others it suggested an attempt to dissociate the Germans from their Western loyalties, for others again, it was seen as an appeal for Eastern and Central Europe, in particular Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, not to be forgotten by the West. The political thrust of this German Social Democratic revival of the concept of *Mitteleuropa* was to pull away from the West, or at least, from the Western Alliance and the United States. Politically, if the SPD was to reject much of the West's influence and security and turn inward, it would have to come to terms with its past. In respect to this dilemma, the German Historian's Debate (*Historikerstreit*) was essentially set into motion with Ernst Nolte's article on 6 June 1986<sup>81</sup> and Jürgen Habermas's criticism of it on 11 July 1986.<sup>82</sup> Nolte argument centered around the dismantling of the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Thus, for Nolte, the Holocaust could and should be viewed as an event similar to other mass-extinction historical episodes. Habermas argued, in response, that this perspective was a "relativization of the Nazi past." Since the emergence of the modern nation-state in Europe, the creation of national identity has always had much to do with the drawing of borders. West Germany made a fresh start after the Second World War and viewed as its most important task reconciliation with the West. This had much to do with the United States' influence and this influence impacted how West Germans viewed their identity. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, there was a desire for protection elevated by the fear of invasion from the East. Yet by the 1980s, this generation had given way to a new one: a generation bent on finding something more than the Allies with which to identify. By attempting to re-discover itself, many Germans looked to a Central European heritage and thus, there was a sensation to turn East-ward. Germans were torn between their Western allegiance and their geopolitical position in the heart of Europe. Through its obligations as

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<sup>81</sup>In his article, Nolte put forward three main and controversial arguments/questions: 1. whether the mass-extinction of Jews by the Germans could be compared with other such mass-extinctions throughout history; 2. what the implications were, historically, morally and ethically; 3. and if there could be even the remotest comparison with the atrocities of the Bolsheviks and the conception of the idea of the Holocaust by Hitler and the practice of it by the people of Germany. See Ernst Nolte's article in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 6 June 1986, pp. 39-47.

<sup>82</sup>Jürgen Habermas views Germany in terms of the liberal and democratic political tradition established by the 18th century Enlightenment. Like most of the liberal social democratic scholars of his time, Habermas considers that the history of Germany before 1945 to have taken a "separate path" from that of the West (i.e. Britain, France and the United States). See Jürgen Habermas in *Die Zeit*, 11 July 1986, pp. 62-76.

part of NATO and the European Community, as well as through the Basic Law, West Germany belonged politically and socially to the West. On the other hand, through its location in Central Europe many Germans felt it necessary to try to reach peace and understanding with its neighbors in the East.

The most intensive talks regarding identity and, of course, the *Historikerstreit* have occurred within the German context. Jürgen Habermas, as Charles Maier stated, forced the discussion of identity especially in his plea for constitutional patriotism and a post-conventional identity.<sup>83</sup> Habermas stressed that the cultural as well as the linguistic interdependencies of life must be renewed in a way that gives it meaning.<sup>84</sup> Habermas could not simply accept the correlation between an evocative, community-oriented (*sinnstiftende*) historiography and old-style national identity on one hand, and a critical history and a post-conventional identity on the other. However, as Maier stated "part of the difficulty with the German discussion has been an unreflective belief that identity is reducible to history, or that whatever one can know of identity is to be captured exclusively by the historian's craft."<sup>85</sup> However, Hagen Schulze wrote that the answer to the problem of the German nation-state can be answered "only from history. ... Our identity is explained sufficiently only when our history is known: we are what we have become."<sup>86</sup>

These policies are, as Peter Glotz concluded, to meet the challenge of the new *Kulturkampf*, to not leave the identity issue in control of the Christian Democrats, and to regain ideological motivation lost during the *Tendenzwende*.<sup>87</sup> Glotz maneuvered the discussion within the SPD past the more rationalist model of political culture of Habermas to address a more general notion of human needs suggested by identity, invoking utopian ideals which were influential to the Social

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<sup>83</sup>Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, 1988, p. 151. For the original text see Jürgen Habermas, "Können komplexen Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden?" in *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus*, 1976.

<sup>84</sup>Jürgen Habermas, "Geschichtsbewusstsein und posttraditionale Identität. Westorientierung der Bundesrepublik," in *Eine Art Schandensabwicklung. Kleine politische Schriften VI*, 1987, p. 166.

<sup>85</sup>Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, 1988, p. 149.

<sup>86</sup>Hagen Schulze, *Wir sind was wir geworden sind. Vom Nutzen der Geschichte für die deutsche Gegenwart*, 1987, p. 12.

<sup>87</sup>Glotz, Peter, *Die Linke nach dem Sieg des Westens*, 1992, p. 95.

Democrats in the 1960's.<sup>88</sup> In the 1980s, the *Historikerstreit* influenced and was influenced by the debate on *Mittleuropa*. *Mittleuropa* was emphasized in political debates, mainly in West German academic circles, with differing impulses and aims. For the SPD, the impulses were to rethink the unity of Europe and to support the desires of the East and Central Europeans for more self-determination; and the aims were to support a more independent German foreign policy; to overcome the necessity for a nuclear shield provided by the US; to move towards the Europeanization of Europe; and to develop more neutralistic concepts for Central Europe.

### The "Common Paper"

A third product of SPD-SED discussion, developed between the Commission for Basic Values of the SPD and the Academy of Social Sciences of the SED, dealt less with security and arms control than the previous joint proposals. It was developed with the goal of establishing a set of suggested rules for competition between pluralistic and Marxist-Leninist societies. In August 1987, on the eve of Honecker's official visit to Bonn, Erhard Eppler and Otto Reinhold<sup>89</sup> presented their "Common Paper." This was published not only in the West German press but also in the East German party daily, *Neues Deutschland*.<sup>90</sup> Under the title "The Dispute of Ideologies and Common Security" (*Der Streit der Ideologien und die gemeinsame Sicherheit*),<sup>91</sup> this paper was the most significant result of the contacts between the SPD and SED because it went beyond the old and established links surrounding security affairs<sup>92</sup> and dealt with ideology.<sup>93</sup> The

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<sup>88</sup>See Geoff Eley, "Viewpoint: Nazism, Politics and the Image of the Past: Thoughts on the West German Historikerstreit 1986-1987," *Past and Present*, vol. 121, November 1988, p. 121.

<sup>89</sup>Officially, Eppler and Reinhold were behind the presentation of the "Common Paper;" however, in discussing the paper with Meyer, Voigt, Bahr, and Koch all expressed the opinion that it was indeed Rolf Reißig who contributed most to the paper. Moreover, Meyer expressed that he, not Eppler, developed and worked in the dispute sections of the "Common Paper." Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

<sup>90</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 28 August 1987; also published in *Politik*, 3-1987.

<sup>91</sup>Thomas Meyer stated that this was a "bad" title. He had wished it to be called, "Basic Values: Pluralism and Democracy" because of his concentration (the parts that he authored) on democratic principles. Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995. Moreover, as late as July 1987, Reinhold (SED) had written that the title (presumably working) had been "The Common Fight regarding Peace and the Dispute of Ideologies" (*Der gemeinsame Kampf um den Frieden und der Streit der Ideologien*); *Zentrales Parteiarhiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/79.

<sup>92</sup>Egon Bahr explains that most of the discussions with the SED prior to the "Common Paper" dealt with straightforward specifics which he characterized as "und ... und ... und ... oder ... oder ...

"Common Paper" was geared at developing a "culture of ideological dispute" between the social systems in order to establish "more peaceful competition."<sup>94</sup>

The discussions surrounding the "Common Paper" began, according to Thomas Meyer, in a meeting between SPD and SED officials in Freudenstadt in 1986 following the nuclear-weapons paper. He explains that there was talk among SED officials, especially Rolf Reißig, regarding genuine reform. Then he explained that he issued the SED a challenge by saying, "let's write these things down."<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, Meyer stated that "the time had come to develop democratic socialist debate in accordance with the 'second phase' of *Ostpolitik*. In the first working group phase (*Bearbeitungsphase*) the discussions were led by Thomas Meyer (SPD) and Rolf Reißig (SED). In the second phase the discussions were conducted and the outline was worked over by Erhard Eppler (SPD) and Otto Reinhold (SED). In fact at the inception of the talks, the conversations were purposely made to be philosophical in the form of scientific debates detached from the political level. This was done by the two sides to heighten the room for thoughts and exchanges of opinions."<sup>96</sup>

From the first paragraph onward, the "Common Paper" was clearly an opinionated text mixed with platitudes. "Existing in our world is a historically new situation in which mankind can only survive together or perish together. ... Safeguarding peace has become the basic imperative for all responsible politics."<sup>97</sup> The fundamental principle in the paper was the need for the West and East, the FRG and the GDR, the United States and the Soviet Union to safeguard peace "through common security."<sup>98</sup> Because of the threat of total nuclear annihilation and the heightening of the tension between the super-powers in the mid-1980s, "the

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oder:" meaning classic quid pro quo negotiations. Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas Meyer stated that talking with the SED about ideology, represented a shift in their thinking which caused them to rethink their own existence. Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

<sup>94</sup>SPD-SED Common Paper, "Der Streit der Ideologien und die gemeinsame Sicherheit," reprinted in Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, p. 13.

<sup>95</sup>Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

<sup>96</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 64.

<sup>97</sup>Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, p. 11.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.



commandment of the hour" was "a turning point in international relations - a common policy of safeguarding peace" (*gemeinsame Friedenssicherung*).<sup>99</sup>

Such a turning point in international relations was seen as not simply necessary, but also possible.<sup>100</sup> The paper asserted that it was not "the quality of the weapons, but the quality of the politics" which decided "security and stability in the world." Furthermore, "an effective and enduring international system encompasses not simply the military, but also the political, economic and humanitarian sector." Peace was achieved when nations would "no longer arm against each other, but agree together."<sup>101</sup> Needed was "common security" in which each nation would "acknowledge and respect the legitimate security interests of the other side."<sup>102</sup>

Within the "Common Paper," the SPD was willing to go much further on the status of an independent GDR than it had in the past. The paper articulated this notion. "Each side [the FRG and GDR] must grant the same measure (*Maß*) of security to the other that it claims for itself."<sup>103</sup> Guarantees for life, preservation of the environment, and the fight against hunger were mentioned along with security issues. However, the *Grundwertekommission* expressed the view that the "Common Paper" was not necessarily an explanation of the stance that the SPD would take if it were to regain control of government.<sup>104</sup>

One of the main themes running throughout the paper is the charge that war as a means of political action must be ruled out. This "ruling out" of war would lead to one of the SPD's major objectives; i.e., "military doctrines" centered around "defense and *Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*."<sup>105</sup> The "Common Paper" argued that this measure would lend itself to a "debate between both social systems ... peaceful competition, coercion-free disputes about all political and ideological

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Erhard Eppler, "Ärger mit allzu simplen Begriffen: Zum Widerhall auf das gemeinsame Papier von SPD und SED," in *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, Ausgabe 218, Bonn, 13 November 1987.

<sup>105</sup>Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, pp. 12-13.

disagreements as well as cooperation" for the mutual benefit of both systems.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the most important mission was to halt the arms race and to promote disarmament.

The second section of the "Common Paper" dealt with and was titled "more peaceful competition of the social systems." Elaborating on much of the dialogue from the first section, this section concentrated on the competition of the systems in order to achieve discussion regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each system. The paper then converged on the similarities and especially the differences of the two systems. The paper stated that the "relationships between both systems are not simply characterized by collective, parallel, or similar approaches, but also [and] especially by opposing interests."<sup>107</sup> In relation to the first section of the paper the second section asserted that "only when peace has been secured and history has gone further, can the dispute regarding the better system be carried out."<sup>108</sup> "There is today no better [and] sensible alternative toward an active policy of safeguarding peace [than] through disarmament and peaceful competition between the opposing systems."<sup>109</sup> Further: "System competition, when it is united with the reduction of arms, can promote and accelerate social advance in both systems."<sup>110</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, a denuclearized Europe was the main goal of Egon Bahr's concept of "common security."

The paper continued to argue that each system, East and West, could "claim points only by the example it demonstrates."<sup>111</sup> Such competition gave human beings (*Menschen*) a better chance to "demand their interests and rights [and] to realize their values and ideals."<sup>112</sup> Furthermore the text referred to the social systems tackling "environmental dangers" (*Umweltgefahren*) and development of the Third World. Other areas of peaceful dispute amongst the social systems were scientific and technical advance, the development of "living democracy," and the inter-relationship (*Verhältnis*) between economics and ecology: "from man and nature"

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

(von Mensch und Natur).<sup>113</sup> Reminiscent of Brandt's original *Ostpolitik* was the discussion of "cooperation between the states in the political, economic, scientific-technical, cultural and humanitarian" fields. The paper spoke of the development of "human civilization" (*Entwicklung der menschlichen Zivilisation*).<sup>114</sup> "We want a Europe of friendly cooperation, trust, and good neighborliness."<sup>115</sup> Moreover, the paper stated that the deepening of the CSCE process continued to constitute an important basis for future European security policy.<sup>116</sup> Notably, the paper maintained that both German states acknowledged their historic obligations and geo-political situation (*politisch-geographischen Lage*).<sup>117</sup>

The third segment of the "Common Paper" dealt with the "necessity of a culture of political dispute and dialogue."<sup>118</sup> It attempted to mutually set up a "new community in the fight for peace" for the "humanitarian heritage of Europe" in order to "realize democracy and human rights."<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the parties recognized the bitter dispute which they had experienced for seven decades. Then the text went on to explain the convictions of the two parties' basic values. The Social Democrats began by defining themselves as "part of western democracy." "For Social Democrats, human rights alone have absolute value."<sup>120</sup> The SED defined themselves as "Marxist-Leninists," striving for "social security, full-employment, social justice and real education opportunities for all."<sup>121</sup> The parties stressed that the dispute regarding such dramatically opposed basic positions would not be resolved either by compromise formulas or simply by appeals to desires of peace. "But the dispute concerning basic positions could become part of a productive competition of the systems, if carried out in such a way that Communists and Social Democrats respect each other's basic positions, did not view each other as enemies (*Feindbilder*), did not suspect the other side's

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<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Meyer asserted that this component (dispute between the systems) was written by him. Moreover, he arrived at the points within this section by first asking members of opposition groups within the GDR what they would like to see in the joint SPD-SED paper. Interview with Thomas Meyer, 9 February 1995.

<sup>119</sup>Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, p. 15.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

motives nor deliberately misrepresent their convictions and defame views represented."<sup>122</sup>

In section four entitled "The basis for a culture of political dispute," the two parties acknowledged that they were united in the understanding that peace was "the basic requirement" of their "respective values and principles," and "that cooperation for the purpose of peace neither demands a denial of these principles nor makes such a denial seem advisable."<sup>123</sup> Moreover, both sides must prepare for a long period where they exist side-by-side. Thus, the paper argued that no one side could "deny the other the right to exist" (*Existenzberechtigung*).<sup>124</sup> A predominant element of the "Common Paper" was its belief in the settled status of both systems and even a "hope" that one system would not abolish (*abschaffen*) the other without judgment.<sup>125</sup> This reliance on judgment, not war, nor even peaceful revolution from beneath, would determine the survival of a system. This acceptance of the *status quo* led to the following directives:

Both systems must be capable of reform (*Reformfähigkeit*);  
Both systems must be capable of peace (*Friedensfähigkeit*);<sup>126</sup>

The two parties manipulated the idea of *Friedensfähigkeit* in order to espouse their own particular concepts. For the SED, this was in the form of "Peaceful Coexistence" (*Friedliche Koexistenz*) amongst societies with different social orders.<sup>127</sup> And for the SPD, this was through the idea of "common security." Yet, the authors attempted to combine the two notions; stating that the two were "theoretically pointless" if not combined together and comprehended with the other viewpoint.<sup>128</sup>

The paper additionally argued that "fears" (*Ängste*) of one system toward the other (especially the West toward the East) must, through the process of a political

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid.

<sup>127</sup>For a review of the SED's position in regard to the "Common Paper" and their concentration on "peaceful coexistence" see Harald Langer and Rolf Reißig, "Friedliche Koexistenz und Sicherheitspartnerschaft," in *Institut für Internationale Politik und Wirtschaft Berichte*, June 1986, pp. 37-39.

<sup>128</sup>Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, pp. 17-18.



dispute culture, be torn down.<sup>129</sup> The paper then expressed the desire for the formation of future contracts, agreements and binding institutions. "It must become the norm, that we deal, confer and cooperate together ... simultaneously with clear criticism ... understanding [our] willingness for peace (*Friedensbereitschaft*)." "Cooperation, competition and conflict must be accepted together as forms of behaving."<sup>130</sup> This cooperation including competition would lead to tackling the large missions of mankind (*Menschheitsaufgaben*).<sup>131</sup>

The fifth section of the "Common Paper" was titled: "Basic principles of a culture of political dispute." Within this section, the paper attempted to formulate several basic norms. The first norm was that social systems are not motionless. Meant to be encouraging, the paper called for the two systems to look toward the future, a future in which "both systems concede that each other is capable of development (*Entwicklungsfähigkeit*) and capable of reform."<sup>132</sup> Further norms mentioned were a rejection of specific criticism of one system without the examination and identical criticism of the other;<sup>133</sup> any such criticism of the other's social condition would have to depend on verifiable (*nachprüfbare*) facts;<sup>134</sup> avoidance by the other system of facilitating local conflicts; no direct interference in the internal issues of the other system;<sup>135</sup> the importance of informed citizens in the East and West through publications of both states (in line with the Helsinki Final Act); and a dialogue between all social organizations, institutions, powers and persons on both sides in regard to the competition of both systems including visits, seminars, scientific and cultural events.<sup>136</sup>

Finally the last section of the "Common Paper," "new thinking, new action," reaffirmed the basic new concepts alluded to earlier in the text. It stressed that "common security" (SPD position) could not be reached if the two German states interfered with the other (SED position) and if power conflicts (*Machtkonflikte*) appeared as an "irreconcilable and ineluctable fight between good and evil."<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

Finally, the paper insisted that "common security" involved the renunciation of attempts to interfere directly in the practical politics of the other states. This would result in competition within the framework of commonly formulated rules and a culture of political dispute. Lastly, the two parties stressed that the dialogue between them should continue.

## Support and Criticism

Equally, if not more, important than the specifics of the "Common Paper," were the responses by prominent scholars and political leaders following its publication in 1987. This section will detail many of these responses within the first few months following its release. Moreover, it is important to analyze the immediate reactions to the "Common Paper" to those (detailed in the following chapters) which examine the paper *post facto* and in relation to the fall of the GDR. As Voigt observed as early as 1984, "Security policy ... will continue to stir public controversy over the coming years. A new political consensus on security policy can only grow out of a new overarching Western approach to its relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The concept of *détente* in the 1970s, based on the Harmel Report of 1967, seems a suitable point of departure for the development of such a Western approach in the 1980s."<sup>138</sup> Of all of the three documents between the parties, the "Common Paper" created the largest and most intense debate within West Germany. Moreover, in East Germany hard-liners questioned the validity of the paper as well, some before they even had the chance to read it.<sup>139</sup> Egon Bahr explained that some members in the GDR questioned the motives of his counterparts in the SED with questions like "why are you sitting at the table with these revisionist *Sozis* to develop a 'Common Paper.'"<sup>140</sup> Because of its ideological concentration, the "Common Paper" prompted heated debate, not just in relation to the details of it, but on wider issues of inter-German relations and relations between the superpowers as well. The "Common Paper" challenged the long-held views of the Federal Government, confronted the policy of *détente*,

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<sup>138</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A German Social Democrat's Perspective," in Andrew J. Pierre and William Hyland (eds.), *Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, 1984, p. 118.

<sup>139</sup>Hanne-Margret Birckenbach, "Die SPD-SED-Vereinbarungen über den 'Streit der Ideologien und die gemeinsame Sicherheit,'" *Hamburger Beiträge zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik*, no. 37, April, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>140</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

and proposed a new set of ideals for dealing with the East German nation.<sup>141</sup> As Dieter Haack stated, the "Common Paper" established a "conflicting echo" in the Federal Republic on which one side had "exaggerated criticism" and on the other side, "enthusiastic agreement."<sup>142</sup>

The paper provoked arguments on both sides of the German-German frontier. Its critics in the West charged that the paper had gone too far in conceding legitimacy to Communism and the SED, while relativizing Western values upheld in the SPD's "demarcation resolution" made sixteen years earlier. For example, the CDU stated that the SPD-SED relationship was merely advancing the Soviet *Politbüro's* interests and was "without example in Western Democracy."<sup>143</sup> Moreover, the Kohl government charged that the SPD was now just a "party of Eastern contacts" with a "totalitarian" regime.<sup>144</sup> The paper was defended by the Social Democrats on two basic grounds. First, in line with the new thinking within the SPD, supporters suggested that the nuclear and environmental challenges had indeed changed and relativized the traditional priorities and values expressed in the 1959 Bad Godesberg program. Eppler stated that reform was needed on both sides. "If it really happens that one system is victor in competition, it will not be the system of today."<sup>145</sup> The second line of defense was to argue that the SPD had indeed been a spokesman for Western democracy and Western values in the dialogue, and the paper, even more than the Helsinki Final Act, provided a basis on which would-be democratic socialists inside the SED could justify their criticisms and demands.

Support of the "Common Paper" was prominent within the SPD and even a large portion of the SED. This controversial topic initially united the SPD as did *Ostpolitik* in the 1960s and 1970s;<sup>146</sup> although the practicality of the contacts remained a debate. Some examples of SPD and SED leaders who supported the

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<sup>141</sup>In response to such notions, the CDU stated that the SPD could no longer "tell the difference between a democracy and a dictatorship." See Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 34.

<sup>142</sup>Dieter Haack, "Kritische Anmerkungen zum 'Ideologie-Papier,'" *Deutschland Archiv*, no. 21, 1988.

<sup>143</sup>Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 17, 28.

<sup>144</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30, 33.

<sup>145</sup>Erhard Eppler, *Wie Feuer und Wasser: Sind Ost und West friedensfähig?*, 1988, p. 77.

<sup>146</sup>For example, see articles in support of the Common Paper by the SPD *Präsidium* and *Parteirat* in Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, pp. 28-29 and 96-98.

contacts and who reiterated many of the points of the "Common Paper" in journals and books throughout the 1980s, were Erhard Eppler who invited other parties to join him in the collective dialogues;<sup>147</sup> a *Neues Deutschland* article which asserted that the "Common Paper" would not create an ideological coexistence and highlighted the "clear" contrasts of the systems;<sup>148</sup> and a conversation by Manfred Banaschak, SED director of the journal *Einheit*, with Otto Reinhold, who both referred to the "historic" importance of the "Common Paper" and stressed the need to eliminate nuclear weapons.<sup>149</sup>

A conversation between *Der Spiegel* and Otto Reinhold began by asking whether the "Common Paper's" timing, two weeks before Honecker's first visit to the FRG, was timed to coincide with the visit. Reinhold stated that it was indeed a coincidence (*Zufall*), but it was very useful and favorable.<sup>150</sup> Reinhold articulated that he had a different view of "unification" than did the Federal Republic. He went on to highlight the division of the SPD and SED by explaining that if his father were still alive (an anti-Communist member of the early SPD) he would have "big difficulties" explaining such a document. Moreover, he articulated the SED position within the "Common Paper" which "accepted the existence" of each state. He then stated, after a *Spiegel* question, that he did not believe that the paper was a "parting from the Marxist thesis" and that each system would have to justify its own existence through its actions.<sup>151</sup>

In her article entitled "*Ein Januskopf - Gefahren and Chancen*" (A Janus Head - Dangers and Chances), Gesine Schwan argues that the "Common Paper" was misdirected. As a member of the SPD, Schwan was well placed to argue the benefits and drawbacks of the paper.<sup>152</sup> (Schwan had even earlier published a report in *Vorwärts* with Egon Bahr arguing for the basic principles of security

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<sup>147</sup>Erhard Eppler, "Friede zwischen Ost und West und ungezügelter ideologischer Polemik vertragen sich nicht," in Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, pp. 22-27.

<sup>148</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 31 August 1987.

<sup>149</sup>Ein Dokument von historischem Rang, *Einheit Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis des Wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus*, no. 9, 1987.

<sup>150</sup>"Ein System kann das andere nicht abschaffen," *Der Spiegel*, no. 36, 31 August 1987. However, Voigt asserted that it was not really that simple. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>151</sup>"Ein System kann das andere nicht abschaffen," *Der Spiegel*, no. 36, 31 August 1987.

<sup>152</sup>However when the author expressed this thought to Voigt, he answered, "she was always on the right, I was on the left. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.



politics.) Although Schwan points out that her examination of the "Common Paper" and contacts between the SPD and SED would reveal both positive and negative points, her argument turned out to be the most significant internal SPD rebuke of the inter-party contacts. The article which appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* began with the mention: "Gesine Schwan does not wish to argue against her party, but with it and in it."<sup>153</sup> As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the characterization of the SPD's contacts as a *Januskopf* was first articulated in Schwan's article. She began her essay by asking the question: "Does the SPD need to award the Communistic single party dictatorship approval of its existence simply because the Soviet Union has nuclear weapons?"<sup>154</sup> This was in stark contradiction to Voigt's statement, "[t]he Soviet Union cannot credibly and successfully use its military potential to blackmail Western Europe."<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, her main argument was that the SPD did not need to redefine its relationship with the GDR because they had earlier done a proper job of defining the relationship through the February 1971 *Parteiratsbeschluß* (party-council resolution). The "Common Paper," in an attempt to redefine the inter-party relationship, was inconsistent with the 1971 decision.<sup>156</sup> Schwan argues that the 1971 *Parteiratsbeschluß* was characterized by its focus on shifting policies of party dictatorships to peaceful democracy which confronted the GDR with its one party dictatorship. "The Communist system of the GDR is no acceptable alternative to our peaceful order." She then stated that "these reforms have up until now been unsuccessful."<sup>157</sup> Her point was that until the GDR shifted its policies, a new definition of the relationship was not worthwhile.

The bulk of her critique of the "Common Paper" took the form of analysis and comparison of the "Common Paper" and the *Parteiratsbeschluß*. She mentioned that similarities such as war being used as a political means and pragmatic cooperation were noteworthy in both documents. However, she criticized the SPD for the differences, which she saw as inauspicious. Schwan stated that the notion

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<sup>153</sup>Gesine Schwan, "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 September 1987.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>Karsten D. Voigt, "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: A German Social Democrat's Perspective," in Andrew J. Pierre and William Hyland (eds.), *Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, 1984, p. 99.

<sup>156</sup>Gesine Schwan, "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 September 1987.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

of safeguarding the peace was not substantially mentioned in the "Common Paper." Nor was a critique of Communism mentioned. She noted that the *Parteiratsbeschluß* "assigned Communists the goal of freedom" and the "Common Paper" discussed the "humanitarian heritage" of Europe which she saw as being little more than a dispute between Social Democrats and Communists. The *Parteiratsbeschluß*, she stated, had only talked about "respecting" the internal order of the states, and the Common Paper "goes the crucial step" to legitimizing it.<sup>158</sup>

Schwan viewed the SED's effort in the "Common Paper" as, in the most favorable event, contradictory, and at the other extreme, dishonest. As a member of the SPD, Schwan faulted the mentality of the SPD leadership. She stated, "they [SPD leaders] can't honestly argue for a peaceful and social democracy ... and confirm the validity of a Communist single party dictatorship." Furthermore, Schwan argued that the legitimacy of opposite positions as a core declaration in the "Common Paper" was not necessary. She added that a "mutual renunciation of coercion is a more sufficient and honest path to overcome mutual fears."<sup>159</sup>

Schwan noted that the "Common Paper" lacked important issues that were part of the *Parteiratsbeschluß*. She observed that there were no questions regarding arbitration, party dictatorships or foreign determination as were mentioned in the *Parteiratsbeschluß*. Moreover, she viewed the "Common Paper" as contrary to these initiatives. In regard to the "peace capability" mentioned in the "Common Paper," Schwan demonstrated that the Bismarck Reich could have been seen as being capable of peace because it did not conduct war outside its territory. Schwan stated that peace would prevail only where people were able to live free of fear. Schwan felt that the policy of "common security" adopted in "Common Paper" was not necessary in the joint paper. She explained that "common security, that is the silence of weapons between the blocks, is worth a lot, but that does not secure peace."<sup>160</sup>

Schwan questioned the fact that the GDR would open itself to incorporating democratic principles by explaining, "conversely, there is no requirement that the

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<sup>158</sup>Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

Social Democrats oblige themselves to a Communist direction." She stated that in this basic make-up, the paper was "contradictory." Schwan's most unequivocal argument was that the "Common Paper," in abandoning the peace component mentioned in the *Parteiratsbeschluß*, would "endanger not just the [true] understanding of democracy, but also the identity of social democracy."<sup>161</sup> She admits, albeit suspiciously, that the Social Democrats had achieved, through the signature of the Communists, the acknowledgment of the need for democratic and pluralistic reforms of the Communist system. It appears to have been one of the reasons why Richard Löwenthal, the main author of the 1971 "demarcation resolution," also felt able to support the joint paper.<sup>162</sup> Yet, in closing she reasserted that the paper was a *Januskopf* and it pursued conflicting goals: "The SPD had a chance, but they risked too much."<sup>163</sup> Moreover, in response to the new policies of the SPD towards the Soviet Union and the GDR Gesine Schwan stated in a book dedicated to the question:

Why do so many Social Democratic activists close their eyes to these threats ... Because their understanding of the Soviet Union is ambivalent. They respectively trivialize and dramatize Soviet policy, two attitudes that are not contradictory. Beneath the superficial trivialization of Soviet policy lies deep fear and resignation toward Soviet military power. ... The dynamic thrust in the shaping of SPD policy now comes from Oskar Lafontaine, Erhard Eppler, and Egon Bahr. Their common denominator is critical distance to the West, suspicion (verging on hostility) toward the policy of the United States and the promotion of nationalist resentments against the superpowers and especially against America.<sup>164</sup> ... This chosen course is leading directly towards making German Social Democracy, founded in the name of freedom, *de facto* into one of the most effective instruments of the Soviet policy of domination.<sup>165</sup>

Gerd Bucerius, the owner of *Die Zeit* and a member of the *Bundestag* (CDU) from 1949-1962, analyzed and criticized the "Common Paper" in his article entitled

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<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

<sup>162</sup>Richard Löwenthal in *Die Welt*, 2 September 1987.

<sup>163</sup>Gesine Schwan, "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 September 1987.

<sup>164</sup>For the view that the SPD was "on an anti-American course" see Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 14.

<sup>165</sup>Gesine Schwan, "Die SPD und die westliche Freiheit," in Maruhn and Wilke (eds) *Wohin treibt die SPD?*, 1984, pp. 50-51.

"From the past is nothing learnt?"<sup>166</sup> Bucerius states that the "Common Paper" of the SPD with the SED was established on "the wrong basis." One of his main points was that the paper ignored the division of the SPD and the USPD (the Social Democratic Party of East Germany) and its later absorption by the KPD and this was "hushed" by the SPD along with the dictatorial East German regime. He asked whether this new relationship of the SPD with the SED has "erased" (*ausradiert*) the parties' past division. Moreover he stated that the contacts between the parties, in some way, "soften the division of Germany." Bucerius states that his initial "misgivings" were realized when the first sentence caught his eye. In regard to the first sentence of the "Common Paper" (mankind can only survive together or perish together), he stated that this hypothesis was "nonsense" (*Unsinn*). He asserts that since 1945 there were fierce often deadly confrontations around the globe; yet, they were not the "end of mankind." His position in direct contradiction with the "Common Paper" declared that the arms race had rendered total war "virtually impossible." It appears that his statements, however cold they may seem, were challenges in an effort to challenge the paper's matter-of-fact assertions.

Despite the mention of Eppler as a visionary, he criticizes him severely. "Eppler believes in the immediate forthcoming destruction of the world."<sup>167</sup> Bucerius went on to declare that such beliefs were "desperate judgments, even a relinquishment of democratic and moral principles. Moreover Bucerius questioned the validity of the statement in the paper that a new security policy based on "common security" was not simply necessary, but also possible. He plainly asks "how?" Additionally, in regard to the statement that it was not the quality of weapons but the quality of politics that determined security and stability in the world, he declares "really?" He maintained that the possession of weapons was simply politics (*so ist ... Politik*), and "no sermon from the mountain-tops [would] change" that. Bucerius recounted the reference within the "Common Paper" on "contest" and "competition" by asking "how do nations become so friendly that opposition is carried out peacefully?" In addition, Bucerius asks "[w]ho decides, if the East or West has the better system?" "Furthermore" he asked "what system do the Soviets actually have?..[The paper states that it is] Marxist Leninist. We know

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<sup>166</sup>Gerd Bucerius, "Aus der Vergangenheit nichts gelernt?", *Die Zeit*, no. 38, 11 September 1987.

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*



but: Practically no one in the Soviet Union or the GDR believes in Marxist-Leninism."<sup>168</sup> He went on to report that this comparison lead to a legitimization of the system in the East which has "the power to command 288 million human beings in the Soviet Union and 17 million in the GDR." He argued that this power would not be eradicated with peaceful competition.

Furthermore, Bucerius asked, should we examine the system in the West and if it is indeed "feeble, ... what ... capitulate?"<sup>169</sup> Bucerius claimed that "the world knows exactly which system is better." Bucerius stated that "democracy for us is the rule of the people," and the East is, in this regard, deficient (*mangelhaft*). He asked should "both [parties] be able to utilize the same word in the same paper?" He continued "with his signature, Eppler has permitted one to label the Eastern system a democracy." He argued that the "Common Paper" should not have been one, but two separate Papers as Richard Löwenthal had originally contended. Finally, Bucerius stated, "human rights can only be realized in a (genuinely) democratic state. ... The social system of the East is wanting and I must call it into question. It is inhuman."<sup>170</sup>

In addition to frictions with other members of the Warsaw Pact, the SPD-SED security dialogue had not been without its problems for the SED leadership. Hard-line SED conservatives had apparently repeatedly asked what the SED would gain from making concessions on arms control with the opposition Social Democrats who had no present prospect of leading the FRG government. Ash notes that the joint paper produced a rare argument in the *Politbüro*, with one member, Alfred Neumann, sharply attacking it.<sup>171</sup> The SED's veteran ideologist, Kurt Hager, soon publicly qualified the paper's claims about the "peace-capability" of imperialism.<sup>172</sup> Nonetheless, after a slow start in the inter-German security dialogue before advent of the more flexible Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union, the GDR leadership seemed attracted by the possibility of a role as favored emissary of the Warsaw Pact with the FRG government (as distinguished from the

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 326.

<sup>172</sup>Egon Krenz in *Neues Deutschland*, 28 October 1987; for internal SED debate see *Der Spiegel*, 51-1987; however Hager had, in 1987, "gone over" the text in the "Common Paper" before it was finally approved. See *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/79.

SPD), to which no other non-Soviet Warsaw Pact state could aspire and which so thoroughly met the desires of the East German population.

Ash noted that a September 1987 report by the *Stasi*'s central evaluation group on popular reactions to the paper dwelled at length on the extent to which Party members and "progressive citizens" were unsettled and confused by what the "Common Paper" said. The *Stasi* report emphasized the critical rather than the supportive voices.<sup>173</sup> Thus the critics reportedly said that it would now be more difficult to maintain the "defense-readiness" of the younger generation. Also "the discussion on the competition of the systems, the comparison of their successes and failures, would set the GDR difficult tasks, in light of the difficult economic situation and in particular of difficulties with consumer supplies."<sup>174</sup> The *Stasi* went on to report that leading figures in the Liberal Democratic Party (one of the "front" or "bloc" parties in the East German system) took this as an occasion to hope for fundamental changes in the information policy of the GDR. Finally, "hostile-negative persons" saw in the paper a positive chance for developing their activities.<sup>175</sup>

Critics in the Kohl government continued to fault these collaborative activities of the Social Democrats with the SED as undermining Western negotiating positions as well as the official government-to-government discussion of security issues.<sup>176</sup> At the same time, as intended by the Social Democrats, the stream of SPD-SED proposals had drawn attention to the relative absence of substance in those official contacts and had brought pressure to bear on the West German government to do more.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Along the same line Mielke, head of the *Stasi*, was concerned with the negative reaction within the FRG and the "right-wing" members of the SPD. See his comments in an "Information" article in *Zentrales Parteiarhiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/79.

<sup>174</sup>*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*: Z4230, 24 September 1987, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 326.

<sup>175</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup>Dokumentation der CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, "SPD-Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik: Gefahr für Freiheit und Sicherheit unseres Landes," 29 August 1986, p. 18.

<sup>177</sup>For this argument see Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, pp. 169-170.

The criticism in West Germany prompted a discussion within the parliamentary leadership of the Social Democrats. A small group had already been licensed to make cautious, informal contacts not only with the Protestant Church in the GDR (which was relatively unproblematic for the SED) but also with Church-protected peace activists. However, this activity was extremely low-key and fragmentary, and its leading protagonist, Gert Weisskirchen, himself stated that the Social Democratic leadership continued to concentrate almost exclusively on contacts with the leaders of the East German party state.<sup>178</sup> Specifically, Joachim Garstecki argued that church initiatives had promoted more positive efforts at peace protection than did the "Common Paper."<sup>179</sup>

In his book *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, Klaus Moseleit begins by analyzing the events which led the SPD to seek a relationship with the ruling party of East Germany. At the SPD party conference in Lübeck in 1985, the SPD stated: "Therefore it is no surprise that ... German Social Democrats from the Federal Republic and German Communists from the GDR seek peace and cooperation in Europe. By this, the German people might certainly understand, though not through an exclusive role, but through the same language, common history and geographical proximity as peacemakers for their European neighbors in East and West."<sup>180</sup> Moseleit contends that "for the SPD the ... visitation-offensive (*Besuchsoffensive*) component was the new, 'second phase' of their *détente* policy." The SPD emphasized that their new policy dealt with inter-German contacts and not some bargained special relationship. Rather it was a new concept that stretched to all East-block nations. The SPD realized that if the inter-German contacts were successful, they had to avoid the impression that they conceived of a special path (*Sonderweg*) with the SED. It was, after all, the party's new security concept that reinforced these contacts and the feeling that the new generation of politicians within the SPD were appearing to be finally coming into responsibility. Moreover, Moseleit observes that the value (*Stellenwert*) of the SPD contacts in the years after 1982, was enhanced because there was a feeling

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<sup>178</sup>Gert Weisskirchen, Bonn, 24 June 1992; see also Weisskirchen in *Die Tageszeitung*, 21 February 1992, and Weisskirchen in *Deutschland Archiv*, 5-1992, pp. 526-30.

<sup>179</sup>Joachim Garstecki, "Sicherheit miteinander teilen," in Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, p. 99.

<sup>180</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 52.

that no governmental negotiations were leading anywhere.<sup>181</sup> Thus the SPD was in the position to employ and demonstrate alternative concepts contra to the government. And it was at this time, explains Moseleit, that the inter-party contacts had "stepped into the foreground."<sup>182</sup>

Moseleit further describes the significance of the new generation. He asserts that "the youth politics (*Jugendpolitik*) of the SPD-Bundestagsfraktion and its contacts ... were the result of a delegation visit under the leadership of Professor Horst Ehmke to the *Volkskammer* of the GDR" by invitation of the leader of the *Volkskammer*, Horst Sindermann. Furthermore, after the conversation of Willy Brandt with Erich Honecker, the road was prepared for the first concrete preparations for contacts on both sides; this was formalized from 8-10 January 1986, in East Berlin. Moreover, topics such as peace protection, low-risk politics, working circumstances, economic questions, new technologies and environmental protection were at the top of the new generation's list.

In particular, Moseleit highlights the process that led to the SPD-SED "Common Paper." "In early summer 1984 on the Scharmützelsee a dialogue commenced that enabled for the first time since the splitting of the worker movement seventy years ago a paper on common principles to be formulated."<sup>183</sup> The "Common Paper," explains Moseleit, fell somewhere between the proclamations of Gorbachev and the "new thinking" in the Soviet Union, Reykjavik and the INF agreement, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the changed attitude of Reagan towards the Soviet Union. Moseleit defines the essential elements of the "Common Paper" as:

1. "The emphasis of dialogue."
2. "The attempt to secure a commitment to norms for a culture of political dispute [*Kultur des politischen Streits*]."
3. "The reciprocal acknowledgment of a capability of reform [*Reformfähigkeit*]."

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<sup>181</sup>See Willy Brandt's statements in *Die Welt*, 14 April 1986.

<sup>182</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 53.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63.



4. "The reciprocal acknowledgment of a capability of peace [*Friedensfähigkeit*]."
5. "The absorption of system conflicts into the concept of a *détente* policy [*Systemkonflikt in das Konzept der Entspannungspolitik*]."
6. "The specification of peaceful competition [*friedlichen Wettbewerbs*] for the deciding of system conflicts."
7. "The dismantling of enemy images [*Feindbilder*] on both sides."<sup>184</sup>

Moseleit also noted that the wording "We German Communists and Social Democrats" in the "Common Paper" was technically inaccurate because it dealt with a description of compromise between the SPD and the SED. Moseleit asserts that the "Common Paper" was not grounded in the idea of any "convergence theory." Moreover, within the two parties, the differences were rather plainly formulated and expressed. Yet, he states that the agreement, if only on paper, upon a capability of reform was something quite new (*etwas Neues*).<sup>185</sup> Otto Reinhold (SED) declared: "People, the continuous declaration that Socialism is a rigid and dogmatic system ... naturally not. ... Socialism is capable of development and reform."<sup>186</sup> The goal for the SED was deep-seated. The SED sought to gain "democratic legitimation and acknowledgment of [competent] human rights." The "Common Paper," explains Moseleit, was a motor for a social change; however, the SED had to go along with it in order to enhance their image on issues such as democratic legitimation and in order to obtain more prestige for their own value system.<sup>187</sup> Yet despite general support from the Soviet Union regarding the action the SED was undertaking with the SPD, Otto Reinhold acknowledged that within the Soviet Union there was concern, which he characterized as "the danger from the East"; a danger which he described as displeasure that "the little socialist state (*sozialistischer Staat*) would certify itself as being capable of peace."<sup>188</sup>

On the subject of peace capability, Eppler stated: "Our experiences do not speak for the principle of peacefulness, but for the permanent conflict preparedness of

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<sup>184</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>186</sup>Otto Reinhold, "Antworten auf Frage zum Streit der Ideologien und zur gemeinsame Sicherheit, Gespräch mit dem "Neuen Deutschland," in *Neues Deutschland*, 11 November 1987.

<sup>187</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, 1991, pp. 67-68.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

both sides. On the other hand, peace politics of "common security" only help. But this is pointless and irresponsible if the others do not have the capability to speak of such politics. Either they have the capability or not. But both sides should activate and speak the power of peace to the other side."<sup>189</sup>

Moseleit asserts that the importance of the SPD's "second phase" lay in accepting the *status quo*. Yet there was a "dialect relationship between the 'status quo' and [inter-German] development."<sup>190</sup> Their attempt was to reach a goal of a "higher *status quo*" (*höherer status quo*). The "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*, he asserted, was the continuation and advancement of the "old" *Ostpolitik* and had the same basic make-up. The basis of the old and new policy, explains Moseleit, was the impression that Europe would not change in the foreseeable future.<sup>191</sup>

### Continued "Dialogue" Before the Collapse of the Wall

After 1987, the talks on both security policy and ideological issues continued, although the latter were more difficult and tense than before. Erhard Eppler, in particular, seems to have been genuinely affronted by the failure of the SED to take seriously its own solemn commitment to internal dialogue.<sup>192</sup> Delivering the traditional 17 June speech in the *Bundestag* in 1989, Eppler surprised many of his listeners with a dark warning about the future of the GDR.<sup>193</sup> There was, he said, such a thing as a "GDR-consciousness, a sometimes almost defiant feeling of belonging to this smaller, poorer German state."<sup>194</sup> If he was not mistaken, he said, this feeling had been stronger two years before (when the joint paper was published, in the summer of 1987) than it was now, in the summer of 1989. But there was probably, he averred, still a majority in the GDR which hoped "not for the end but for the reform of their state. If, however," he went on, "the leadership of the SED continues to practice that blind self-satisfaction which we have seen in

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<sup>189</sup>Erhard Eppler, "Ärger mit allzu simplen Begriffen: Zum Widerhall auf das gemeinsame Papier von SPD und SED," in *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, Ausgabe 218, Bonn, 13 November 1987.

<sup>190</sup>Klaus Moseleit, *Die "Zweite" Phase der Entspannungspolitik der SPD, 1983-1989*, 1991, p. 69.

<sup>191</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup>Carl-Christain Kaiser in *Die Zeit*, 21 August 1992.

<sup>193</sup>See *Bundestag Plenarprotokolle*, 11. Wahlperiode [special session], pp. 11296-303 (17 June 1989), noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 328.

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11299 (17 June 1989).

recent months, then in two years' time this majority could have become a minority." As for the joint paper's concept of the right to exist, he wished now to add: "neither side can prevent the other from condemning itself to ruin."<sup>195</sup>

Egon Bahr stated that the reason for the continued SPD-SED dialogue after 1987 was that these were the contacts they already had.<sup>196</sup> To continue them at the highest level, for Social Democratic leaders to be received by Gorbachev and Honecker, was also, in the 1980s, to gain credibility at home. The Social Democrats could demonstrate to the electorate that they could deal with the East as with *Ostpolitik*. Many in the party pointed to the "governmental" or "statist" tradition in German Social Democracy, which, they suggested, gained the upper hand in these seven years.<sup>197</sup>

The concepts of *Wandel durch Annäherung*, *gemeinsame Sicherheit*, and subsequent relations with the GDR were based on the assumption and acceptance that power lay with the holders of power. Change could only come from them. Furthermore, the Cold War and confrontation had only hardened their posture. *Détente* was meant to relax it. Only contacts, dialogue and reassurance would move them to reform. And it was no accident that the internal goal of the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was defined precisely with that word: reform. "As the external dimension of *détente* is called peace," said Horst Ehmke, "so the inner dimension is called reform."<sup>198</sup> Karsten Voigt pinned his hopes on reformers from the younger generation, his own generation, within the SED.<sup>199</sup> He explained, "yes, I was interested in identifying young reformers in the GDR; Willy Brandt asked me to do it."<sup>200</sup> All these contacts were therefore meant to promote reform from above. Also, it was argued that this dialogue with the ruling Party expanded the

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<sup>195</sup>Ibid., p. 11300 (17 June 1989); also printed in Erhard Eppler, *Reden auf die Republik: Deutschlandpolitische Texte 1952-1990*, 1990, pp. 31-46..

<sup>196</sup>Egon Bahr, "Indem ich durch diese Hölle gegangen bin," Interview by Gunter Hofmann with Egon Bahr in *Die Zeit*, 13 March 1992.

<sup>197</sup>See Gert Weisskirchen in *Die Tageszeitung*, 21 February 1992.

<sup>198</sup>Horst Ehmke to a seminar of the FES in Bonn, 12-13 March 1988, p. 6 noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 331; Ash also notes that the seminar was a venture in dialogue with advocates of "*détente* from below" from the Western left and peace movement, and with dissidents from Eastern Europe, noted Ehmke in *Vorwärts*, 20 August 1988 in response to critique of the SPD's lack of support for the Eastern European opposition by Sibylle Plogstedt in *Vorwärts*, 13 August 1988.

<sup>199</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>200</sup>Ibid.

tolerance of criticism, and the room for maneuver of Church and opposition groups. And to meet with those groups directly might have jeopardized the party talks. As Egon Bahr argued to Bärbel Bohley, on a television program after unification: "by our not having publicly demanded freedom of movement for the opposition, that became attainable."<sup>201</sup>

In August 1989, there was the prospect that the SPD would publish another paper with the SED. The subject under discussion was the idea of the structural inability to attack (*strukturelle Nichtangriffsfähigkeit*)<sup>202</sup> which had always been a part of Bahr's "common security" as mentioned in chapter three. However, the timing for another paper was publicly not in the interest of the SED. The *Politbüro* agreed to publish this paper, but without a press conference<sup>203</sup> which had in the past been the highlight for the East German regime. Ash notes that an urgent message came to Axen from the GDR's Permanent Representative in Bonn in which Bahr stated that he wished to meet with Axen: "He was afraid that the relations between the parties could get out of control."<sup>204</sup>

Beginning in 1989, the relationship between the SPD and the SED began to deteriorate. The SPD began to pull away from the SED regime, although they supported the existence of the East German government publicly until the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the collapse of the Wall, the SPD split. In December 1989, many SPD members supported the SED under Egon Krenz and hoped for a peaceful reform process within the GDR (this was the official position under Chancellor candidate Oskar Lafontaine); however, many within the SPD agreed with Kohl and his 10 point plan for German reunification.<sup>205</sup> The upheavals of 1989 and the eventual reunification of 1990 created much distress within the SPD. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the SPD was not prepared for

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<sup>201</sup>SPD Press Service report of a lecture in Dresden on 16 February 1992, 85-92, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 332.

<sup>202</sup>*Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/81, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 338.

<sup>203</sup>*Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: JIV 2/2/2340, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 338.

<sup>204</sup>*Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/81, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 338.

<sup>205</sup>Karsten Voigt explained that in the run-up to the collapse of the GDR, he and Willy Brandt pressed for a reinvigorated policy on favor of unification; yet, Oskar Lafontaine and Peter Glotz were in stark opposition to this. Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.



reunification, and its past relationship with the SED allowed the CDU to criticize them for an over excessive pro-SED zeal. The debate ensued. The SPD claimed that its policies and especially the "Common Paper" contributed to change within the GDR and allowed for peaceful reform, while the CDU claimed that it only legitimized the SED regime. The next chapter will address the retrospective statement on the fifth anniversary of the "Common Paper." The Basic Values Commission of the reunited Social Democrats argued: "There is much to be said for the arguments of Rolf Reißig and Manfred Uschner<sup>206</sup> that the uncertainty which the paper caused in the SED contributed to breaking the dogmatic self-confidence of the state-party" so that it lacked the resolve to use force against protesters. And "a blood-bath would probably have been unavoidable if in 1989 there had only been a movement against the SED and not also [movement] inside the state-party."<sup>207</sup> The purpose of the next chapter will be to analyze, step-by-step, the arguments put forward by the SPD in an attempt to determine what was rhetoric and what was reality.

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<sup>206</sup>Both Reißig and Uschner were considered "socially democratized" by members within the SED. Interview with Burkhard Koch, Berlin, 20 February 1995.

<sup>207</sup>"Trotz allem hilfreich: Das Streitkultur-Papier von SPD und SED: Fünf Jahre danach: Eine Stellungnahme der Grundwertekommission," (Typescript, August 1992) DGAP, reprinted in *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, pp. 1100-08.

## *Impact of the "Common Paper" and Change in GDR*

### *Rhetoric vs. Reality*

In August 1992, the now reunited Social Democrats produced a document on the SPD-SED "Common Paper." Five years after the "Common Paper" was introduced, the document was an attempt to "counteract the impression" that the 1987 *Dispute of Ideologies and Common Security* "had stabilized the GDR system."<sup>1</sup> Within the first three years following the publication of the "Common Paper," many articles had been written in the SPD-associated *Deutschland Archiv* explaining the significance of and justifying the paper.<sup>2</sup> The document entitled "In Spite of Everything - Helpful: The Dispute Paper from the SPD and SED; Five Years Later; A Comment by the Basic Values Commission (*Trotz allem - hilfreich: Das Streitkultur-Papier von SPD und SED; Fünf Jahre danach; Eine Stellungnahme der Grundwertekommission*)" was an attempt to bring together the arguments of the reunited SPD, especially Erhard Eppler and Otto Reinhold, former Rector of the Academy of Social Sciences of the SED.<sup>3</sup>

The significance of this document relates to the SPD's assertion that its policies in the 1980s and especially the "Common Paper" of 1987 contributed to change in the GDR. Moreover, it is crucial to understand that the SPD based its statements on one key assumption; i.e., that the principles of the "Common Paper" influenced certain members of the SED which created an environment whereby peaceful

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<sup>1</sup>"Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>For example see *Deutschland Archiv* articles; Heft 1/1988 (*Wortlaut des Papiers*, p. 86 ff., *Rede von Kurt Hager vom Oktober 1987 mit ideologischen Korrekturen*, p. 92 ff., *Interview mit Otto Reinhold in Neues Deutschland vom 11. November 1988*, p. 99 ff., *Diskussionsbeiträge von Thomas Meyer*, p. 32. ff., *Dieter Haack*, p. 40 ff., *Jürgen Schnappertz*, p. 47 ff., *Martin Kriele*, p. 51 ff.; Heft 3/1988 *Politbürobericht an die 5. Tagung des ZK der SED vom 17. Dezember 1987*, p. 323 ff.; Heft 6/1988 *Diskussionsbeiträge von Karsten Voigt*, p. 598 ff., *Guntolf Herzberg*, p. 606 ff.; Heft 10/1988 *Interview mit Erhard Eppler im Deutschlandfunk vom 11. September 1988*, p. 1126 ff.; Heft 6/1989 *Bilanz des Dialogs von der SPD-Grundwertekommission vom 29. März 1989*, p. 713 ff., *Antwort von Otto Reinhold im ADN-Interview vom 31. März 1989*, p. 715 ff., *Erklärung des SPD-Parteipräsidiums zur Verfolgung der Sozialdemokraten in der SBZ/DDR vom 13. März 1989*, p. 1011.

<sup>3</sup>"*Trotz allem hilfreich: Das Streitkultur-Papier von SPD und SED: Fünf Jahre danach: Eine Stellungnahme der Grundwertekommission*," (Typescript, August 1992) DGAP; reprinted in *Politik*, no. 3, August 1987; and later reprinted as "Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," in *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, pp. 1100-08.

reform could take place. Despite the fact that history is still being written on this subject,<sup>4</sup> it is important in a study of the SPD-SED relationship, to examine the events of the late 1980s and the details associated with the principles espoused in the "Common Paper." This is what the "Five Years Later" paper attempted to do. Thus, examining the 1992 document along with events in the former GDR allows for an intriguing study into the effectiveness of the "Common Paper" in the run-up to the collapse of the one-party state. This chapter will discuss the SPD's "Five Years Later" document in order to examine the relationship between the statements by the party in 1992. It will further attempt to determine the relevance of these statements in relation to the actual events that occurred within the GDR prior to its collapse.

### **United in No Action**

The "Five Years Later" document began by placing the "Common Paper" in an historic context in inter-German relations. The document stated that the Social Democrats, in assessing the state of affairs (i.e. the division of Germany), had little choice but to use the policy of small cautious steps in order to improve the relations between the two Germanies.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this policy was adopted by all the political parties in the Federal Republic in late 1982.<sup>6</sup> Such was the state of affairs, states the document, in late summer 1987 during Honecker's visit to West Germany. Moreover, the document explained, the CDU's 1988 program did not state that reunification was likely. Thus, no political party anticipated the swift collapse of the GDR and the Communist System. *Alle waren sich darin einig: jeder gewaltsame Versuch, Veränderungen von außen zu bewirken, beschwor die Gefahr einer sowjetischen Intervention und damit eines Atomkrieges* (All [the political parties in Germany] were united in the belief that any forcible attempt to change things from outside would risk Soviet intervention and thus nuclear war.)<sup>7</sup> These statements seek to rebuke such criticism by scholars and politicians that it dealt too closely with the East German government in the last few years of the 1980s. Furthermore, the SPD implied, in the "Five Years Later" document, that

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<sup>4</sup>This point of view was expressed by Egon Bahr. Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>5</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1100.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 1101.

the government of the Federal Republic also had no idea that the events in 1989 would transpire in the manner that they did.<sup>8</sup>

James McAdams supports this assertion by the Social Democrats. He states that in the Spring of 1988, leaders in the FRG from all parties believed that they had no choice but to work with the GDR government. Furthermore, he states "when two special sessions of the *Bundestag* were called in February 1988 to debate the developments in the East, one West German party could scarcely be distinguished from another in the assessments of what needed to be done to put matters right between the Germanies. Everyone could agree that the SED's hard-fisted manner of dealing with its critics had been deplorable, that the exhibition of a greater degree of 'tolerance and more generosity' was required of its government, and that good-neighborly relations between East Berlin and Bonn presupposed a strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the Basic Treaty. Yet what also stood out, in contrast to the bitter inter-party debates of the 1970s, was the absence of any call by any of the West German parties for retribution or punitive action against the East German government."<sup>9</sup> Uwe Ronneburger, a prominent FDP parliamentarian, summed up the collective attitude of the *Bundestag* when he candidly observed: "I believe we all have occasion in the current situation to do exactly that which we have tried to impress upon the GDR leadership during the last weeks, namely to react calmly."<sup>10</sup>

The "Five Years Later" document explained that many ask themselves why they had not seen the GDR's collapse more clearly. Then it asserted that many "propagandizing unity experts" forget that the exact knowledge of the GDR's economic situation and any alternatives to SPD *Entspannungspolitik* could not have been substantiated.<sup>11</sup> The "Five Years Later" document defended the SPD action on inter-German relations by explaining that the pressure of liberalization, democratization and the continuation of political cooperation was the only real

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 1107.

<sup>9</sup>A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 187.

<sup>10</sup>Ronneburger's remarks along with those of Eduard Linter (CSU), Minister of Intra-German Affairs Dorothee Wilms (CDU), Hans Büchler (SPD), and Heinrich Lummer (CDU) can be seen in *Stenographische Berichte*, 11th elec. period, 57th sess., 3 February, 1988, pp. 3952-3963; noted in A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 187.

<sup>11</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, pp. 1106-1107.



option in the face of the GDR's "self-insulation and open coercion."<sup>12</sup> And there was no evidence that Communism in Europe would fall. "Demarcation had stabilized the Communist system. ... *Entspannungspolitik* was a factor in its collapse."<sup>13</sup>

McAdams states that there was a steady stream of prominent visitors from the FRG into East Berlin during the first six months of 1989, including Walther Leisler Kiep, Ernst Albrecht, and Lothar Späth of the CDU, Olaf Feldmann of the FDP, and Björn Engholm, Johannes Rau, and Hans-Jochen Vogel of the SPD, all of whom used the opportunities provided by their confidential talks with the SED leadership to express varying degrees of concern about the deteriorating internal situation in the GDR. "Yet, above and beyond the necessity of preserving their country's ability to conduct business with the SED regime, by the end of the 1980s very few of the leaders of the major West German parties were eager to contemplate an abrupt change in their relationship with East Berlin."<sup>14</sup> At least in part, this attitude may have resulted from the fact that the governing forces in Bonn had become comfortably accustomed to their newly acquired ability to present the FRG as a force for stability in European affairs, and not as a nagging threat to the *status quo*. For example, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and the FDP had enjoyed phenomenal success, both at the polls and, for that matter, in wresting foreign-policy authority away from the Federal chancellery, by selling the idea of Bonn's role in a "European peace order" (*europäische Friedensunion*) to the West German people. In Genscher's vision, both Germanies would work together "to make the division of [the continent] an anachronism, step by step through cooperation."<sup>15</sup> Kohl too, ever sensitive to the demands of the West German electorate, was quite pleased to continue depicting the CDU as the pillar of reasoned accommodation with the East.

McAdams explains that in the spring of 1988, in fact, only the presence of a handful of hard-line critics within the ranks of the Chancellor's party had kept the Christian Democratic leadership from adopting a platform that would explicitly have put the task of overcoming the division of Europe ahead of the goal of

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 1107.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 190.

<sup>15</sup>Hans-Dietrich Genscher, "Ein Plan für das ganze Europa," *Die Zeit*, 28 October, 1988, p. 3.

restoring German unity. Among the reformers who drafted the proposed policy statement were Horst Teltschik, Dorothee Wilms, Wolfgang Schäuble and Wulf Schönbohm. Their aim was to modernize CDU foreign policy in order to make it more competitive with the policies of the FDP and SPD.<sup>16</sup> Over the following year, even after the reformers' proposal had been watered down through intra-party compromises and the CDU found itself challenged to reaffirm its conservative credentials by a small right-wing party known as the Republikaner, the CDU still could not get over the habit of wanting to portray West Germany as a European power like any other.

At this point in 1989, quite unlike the situation during an earlier decade, no major political party in the FRG had either the inclination for a severe deterioration of relations with East Berlin or the awareness that it had much to gain from such an eventuality. In this setting, the West German regime seemed to be left with two fairly straightforward options, both of which amounted to following paths of least resistance. The first, which the Kohl government appeared to pursue throughout the spring of 1989, was simply to continue those contacts with the GDR that still worked to both states' mutual advantage. Sister-city exchanges proceeded apace, new agreements were signed in the field of scientific and technical cooperation, and East Berlin and Bonn also began several joint projects in the area of environmental protection. Not to be outdone, the Social Democrats maintained their own search for an even higher level of inter-German dialogue in international security affairs. They regularly met with East German officials up to June 1989 to discuss a host of possible areas of collaboration, including the opening of formal contacts between the National People's Army and the *Bundeswehr*, further proposals for dismantling European battlefield weapons, and such novel concepts as the need for an "ecological security partnership."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>See "Unsere Verantwortung in der Welt: Christlich-demokratische Perspektiven zur Außen-, Sicherheits-, Europa- und Deutschlandpolitik," *CDU-Dokumentation* 6 (1989), sec. 4; noted in A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 191.

<sup>17</sup>McAdams notes that some Social Democrats like Erhard Eppler (directly) and Oskar Lafontaine and Horst Ehmke (behind the scenes) criticized SED policy in their discussions in the GDR; see Thomas Ammer, "Politische Kontakte Bundesrepublik-DDR im ersten Halbjahr 1989," *Deutschland Archiv*, September 1989, pp. 1019-1027; noted in A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 192.

In contrast, Bonn's second option, which became more and more attractive as the internal situation in the GDR worsened, was simply to avoid East Berlin altogether. In this regard, Kohl himself seems to have found that it was at times much easier to make his party's case for *détente* simply by going to the sources of positive innovation in the socialist world. Thus, in mid-June 1989, he welcomed Mikhail Gorbachev to a reception in Bonn, and over the ensuing summer months he and others in the CDU began to lay the foundations for what they hoped to be a closer relationship with the reformist governments of Hungary and Poland.<sup>18</sup>

To the extent that similar confusion existed within the ranks of the Social Democratic opposition and was signaled by a push by party moderates in July 1989 to move in the opposite direction. With the enunciation of a new platform, "European Security 2000" members of the SPD leadership who had watched the party's chances of regaining control of the government dwindle since 1982 tentatively began to shift away from the era of grandiose experiments in East-West security cooperation toward a re-assertion of trans-Atlantic commonality and closer ties with the United States.<sup>19</sup> Yet, when the SPD met in Berlin in December 1989 it reaffirmed the direction it had taken since Nuremberg. It emphasized the need to replace deterrence with "common security" and to strive for the overcoming of the two blocks. A commitment to remain a non-nuclear and non-chemical country and even to include that status in the constitution was also recommended. In the *Berliner Programm* of December 1989, the SPD restated its adherence to membership in NATO but at the same time declared its intention to assert the interests of the Federal Republic forcefully within the alliance, including

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<sup>18</sup>See Michael Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany and the West, from Krushchev to Gorbachev*, 1991, pp. 355-362.

<sup>19</sup>The principles shaping its thinking on strategy and force posture was a movement away from nuclear first use, a restructuring of the *Bundeswehr* and other forces toward a greater emphasis on reserves and militias, reductions in heavy armor, combat helicopters and combat aircraft, and a rejection of all offensive strategic concepts. The goal is to create a force which is capable of defense but not of launching offensive operations. The further goal would be that set by Egon Bahr of removing all nuclear weapons from non-nuclear states, leaving German security to rest on a conventional defensive defense on both sides and on the strategic nuclear deterrence of the superpowers. The party reaffirmed its support for defensive defense in its *Berliner Programm* in December 1989; see Egon Bahr, Andreas von Bülow and Kasten Voigt, "Europäische Sicherheit 2000 - Überlegungen zu einem Gesamtkonzept für die Sicherheit Europas aus sozialdemokratischer Sicht," SPD Press Service document of 6 July, 1989, pp. 6-7; also reprinted in *Frieden und Abrüstung*, nr. 30, 1989.

its interest in "common security." The goal of its peace policy became the removal of all Soviet and American troops from Europe.

McAdams adds that it is noteworthy to consider the extent to which the parties' consensus on policy toward East Germany may also have left the leaders in West Germany paradoxically dependent on the maintenance of social, and political stability in the GDR. Despite the fact that an increasing number of GDR citizens opted to leave for the West, Bonn still relied upon East Berlin's goodwill in keeping the doors to East-West contacts open. There was little doubt that because the SED was capable of making the Wall more porous, so was the SED equally capable of restricting the GDR citizen's access to the West. "Thus it is hardly surprising that few politicians in the West were anxious to provoke the SED by reawakening old differences."<sup>20</sup>

Here there seems to be some credence to the statements by the SPD in 1992; albeit, it would be inaccurate to state that the SPD dealt with the SED leadership to the same degree as all the parties in West Germany. The events of 1989 do point to the fact that no one within SPD or the West German government was prepared for the swift collapse of the GDR. However, the questions relating to SPD policy and the "Common Paper" become more partisan when viewed in relation to their actual impact on internal SED reform, especially in the area of human rights.

## Human Rights

The "Five Years Later" document argued that the policies of Gorbachev were vital to any transformation in the East; however, it further argued that without the policies of *Ostpolitik* the changes of Gorbachev would have been unthinkable. The "Five Years Later" document argued that the combined policies of the treaties,<sup>21</sup> cooperation, the CSCE, and the policy of small steps, contributed to the loosening of the Warsaw Pact and "detached the Soviet leadership from their fixation on the

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<sup>20</sup>A. James McAdams, *Germany Divided: From the Wall to Reunification*, 1993, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup>Here the text is unclear. It refers to "treaty politics;" yet, it does not explain whether these treaties were defined as the *Ostverträge* of the 1960s and 1970s or if they were the SPD-SED agreements of the 1980s. "Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1101.



capitalistic enemy."<sup>22</sup> Thus it is necessary, it argued, to calculate the influence of these initiatives, of which the German peace-movement was the strongest. The strongest argument within the document was that the result of this *Entspannungspolitik*<sup>23</sup> changed the climate in Europe and as a consequence, the revolution in Eastern Europe was different from when the Soviet Army moved in in 1953, 1956 and 1968 and there was no "Chinese solution" as a result.<sup>24</sup>

Within the SPD, the drive for reform was lead by an "offensive ideological dispute" to protest the Communist dictatorship itself. Yet, the SPD admits that the subject of human rights did not occur often within these ideological disputes. The document furthermore admits that this left the impression that the Social Democrats had made a choice between peace and human rights and had chosen peace over human rights. Moreover, the "Five Years Later" document admits that it was "quite right that parts of the SPD, including its leadership, from the success of *Ostpolitik*, did not act swiftly enough."<sup>25</sup> It also stressed that in the late 1980s, it realized too late the significance of the growing citizens movement, and remained in close contact with its party connections. It stated that "one thinks not of the SPD's contacts with the churches and the opposition groups but the official party contacts."<sup>26</sup> Yet, the document argued that one should not come to the conclusion that the SPD in their relations with the leadership in the East did not sympathize with Eastern Europe or fail to insist upon respect for its principles on human rights.<sup>27</sup>

Ash however notes that the only definite, concrete success one can confidently point to is the release (usually to the West) of many individuals from the GDR whose names were on the lists handed over by Social Democrats. According to a note prepared for Hans-Jochen Vogel in 1990, of some 4,320 cases raised since

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>This term can be translated as *détente*; however, the term *Entspannungspolitik* is best used when referring to the SPD's inter-German policy. *Entspannungspolitik* in this context denotes a policy of "relaxation" of tensions between the two Germanies.

<sup>24</sup>This point was made by Richard Schröder. See "Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August, 1992; "Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1100.

<sup>25</sup>See also review of SPD document in "Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August, 1992.

<sup>26</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, pp. 1101-1102.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 1102.

1983 by the Social Democrats' office for "humanitarian help/GDR," 2,128 were resolved before the opening of the Wall.<sup>28</sup> (Whether some of these would not have been released anyway through the usual channels is another question.) One cannot seriously maintain that world peace was preserved simply because of the dialogue between the SPD and the SED. The dialogue helped to promote discussion and even dissent within the SED. Yet it can be argued that this dissent did not contribute to any substantial policy change from within the GDR.

During the late 1980s, not simply the Social Democrats, but the FRG government could be seen as lacking in the field of human rights advocacy. For example, as tensions rose between the Honecker government and the population of the GDR in late 1988 and early 1989, West German negotiators found themselves frequently cast in the uncomfortable role of advocating East German interests. On several occasions, for example, when GDR-citizens sought refuge in the FRG's permanent mission in East Berlin and in West German embassies in other East European capitals, hoping to acquire free passage to the West, it was left up to officials of the Federal Republic to convince such would-be refugees to return to their homes to obtain the right to leave their country through appropriate channels.

Despite the fact that the parties in West Germany attempted to ease the tensions between the Germanies by cooperating with the SED leadership in its aim to control the flow of GDR citizens, the SED tightened its grip. Moreover, Manfred Uschner, former deputy Head of Department in the SED Central Committee, stated that "the quality of life [within the GDR] sank rapidly ... [and] the public climate became unbearable (*unerträglich*). ... The transparent contradiction between morbid success-propaganda and the daily experiences of reality led the SED into a deep crisis."<sup>29</sup> In the unstable period of 1989, for example, the SED seized control of opposition groups within the GDR. Criticism was treated severely. Party officials accused their critics of playing directly into the hands of "counterrevolutionary forces" and called for an unequivocal definition of the "friends and foes" of socialism. Moreover, in June 1989, the Honecker government issued an unmistakable warning to all of its citizens when it came to the defense of the government of the People's Republic of China, only weeks after

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<sup>28</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 339.

<sup>29</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 148.

the latter had suppressed the Chinese democracy movement in the bloody massacre at Tiananmen Square.<sup>30</sup>

### A Credible Partner

The second part of the "Five Years Later" document dealt with the goals and content of the Social Democratic Party's "Common Paper" of 1987. The SPD felt that it "could not sidestep" the sensible successes of *Ostpolitik*. It thus felt it necessary to conduct a relationship with the leadership in the East with the hopes of improving living conditions there.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, it relied on both sides taking the notions behind the "Common Paper" seriously as a credible partner in the dialogue. The "Five Years Later" document argued that the "Common Paper" demanded reforms within the GDR just as the Federal Government had done in the autumn of 1989. "Because these reforms merged so swiftly with the breakdown of the system, the Social Democrats deserve as much credit as the others."<sup>32</sup> The "Five Years Later" document went further to praise the idea of the open discussions in the GDR which the "Common Paper" claimed to have stimulated. The document backs its claim with reference to the report written in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that the "Common Paper" stood as a Magna Carta for the freedom of opinion in the GDR and reiterated that it was even printed in the East German *Neues Deutschland*. It furthermore stated that the "Common Paper" produced a new phase of *Entspannungspolitik* and thus with the western position in the "Common Paper" including "implicit western perceptions of democracy" encouraged the opposition groups to challenge the state-party in an open dispute about human rights, democracy and pluralism.<sup>33</sup> The SPD also stated that, to their surprise, the SED admitted this. The document argued that it is conceivable that the leadership of the SED, beginning with its acceptance of the content in the "Common Paper" in the first half of 1986, seriously considered the ideas of Gorbachev's reform policies and that "reform minded powers in the SED seized this opportunity. The dispute about human rights and democracy, which was crucial, could now be discussed frankly."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Social Democrats

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<sup>30</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 24-25 June, 1989.

<sup>31</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1102.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1103.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

claimed that the "Common Paper," with its dispute between the systems, implied that history was open and people could decide their own future which was a serious break from the tenets of Marxist-Leninism.

The SPD commission stated that the principles of the "Common Paper" were so clear and unequivocal that the SED leadership, only two months after the signing of the paper attempted to escape from its obligations. "Almost all observers in the West and in the GDR recognized that with the concept of a common dispute-culture, the SED leadership had given up their central dogmas."<sup>35</sup> However, East German human rights abuses would inevitably fuel the charge that the "Common Paper" allowed the Honecker leadership to claim credit for engaging in a candid debate on political goals but represented an increasingly worthless gesture with the widening gap between the SED's written commitments and practices. In a March 1987 commentary by the SPD Executive Committee's "Commission of Basic Values," the authors of the "Common Paper" conceded that the SED élite reneged on its commitment to make the paper available in the GDR and was narrowing dialogue with its citizens, although the importance of continuing this discussion with East Berlin was reaffirmed. Yet, Uschner would later specify that the Social Democrats stated that they would only continue the dialogue when "the free internal dialogue in the GDR was permitted."<sup>36</sup> Although the East German regime at times found it useful to display a greater readiness to consult with Social Democratic leaders and thereby register disapproval with specific CDU-FDP policies, such a preference was harder to perceive by the last two years of the 1980s. Honecker's favorite Social Democratic talking partners, Brandt, North Rhine Westphalia Prime Minister Johannes Rau, and ex-Communist Herbert Wehner, continued to be well received, but the SED was also favorably disposed toward Lothar Späth and FRG President Richard von Weizsäcker. East Berlin's more pragmatic attitude toward West German conservatives was best symbolized in Günter Mittag's (member of the *Politbüro* chiefly responsible for GDR economy) and Assistant Foreign Minister Kurt Nier's attendance at the October 1988 funeral ceremonies for Bavarian leader Franz Josef Strauß, as well as the May 1988 visit to East Berlin of the conservative Alfred Dregger (CDU). Such flirtation with the Federal Republic's right served to further blur the ideological

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 144.



orientation of GDR officialdom, even if East German press organs continued to launch partisan attacks on, for example, West Germany's alleged role in organizing GDR dissident groups.<sup>37</sup>

Rhetorical acceptance of the principles of the "Common Paper" within the SED might have given the impression that East Berlin was slowly beginning to make the difficult transition to a more trusting relationship with its citizenry. Yet this would have been to deny the other side of the government's policies in late 1988 and early 1989. Just below the surface, there were many indications that the internal situation in East Germany was becoming more polarized. As Uschner emphasized, the SED had problems with the principles of the "Common Paper" and attempted to avoid its standards.<sup>38</sup>

For example, the May 1989 communal elections in the GDR marked the first time in its history that votes were monitored by unofficial observers. The West German electronic media served as the conduit for East German information-gathering. The success of their Polish and Hungarian counterparts and particularly the Soviet tolerance of change in the Eastern bloc undoubtedly inspired East German dissidents to lodge formal protest with GDR authorities over the fraudulent local elections on 7 May, in which the Communists claimed 98.5 percent of the vote. The subsequent charges of fraud were followed by public outrage over the SED's defense of the Chinese leadership's massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in the following month.<sup>39</sup> Uschner stated that in the late 1980s, the "answer of the SED leadership was to break off the external dialogue and also to freeze the contacts with the SPD."<sup>40</sup>

There are conflicting reports regarding the impact that the "Common Paper" had within the SED leadership. Indeed the policies of *Ostpolitik* contributed to the impression that the SPD had a credible partner within the GDR. Yet, in the later half of the 1980s, it was clear that the SED leadership was not as credible as the SPD had once thought. Moreover, the principles of "open and free discussions"

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<sup>37</sup>See Ilse Spittmann, "Der 17. Januar und die Folgen," *Deutschland Archiv*, March, 1988, pp. 230-231.

<sup>38</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 145.

<sup>39</sup>"Am Leben bleiben," *Der Spiegel*, 12 June, 1989, pp. 27-28.

<sup>40</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 145.

mentioned in the "Common Paper" never truly transpired in the public sphere. Whether these discussions occurred within the SED leadership itself is unclear; however, it appears that "socially democratized" members within the SED, like Rolf Reißig, Max Schmidt and Harald Neubert,<sup>41</sup> were unable substantially to affect the policies of the GDR in the late 1980s. Moreover, following the acceptance of the paper by both party groups in 1987, the GDR regime was even more uncompromising. It can be argued that the ideals within the "Common Paper" were significant in that they argued for "democratic" standards; however, an implementation of these standards never truly resulted.

### Rejection of Gorbachev's Policies

The "Five Years Later" document declared that the "Common Paper" showed the "nakedness" of the Communist regime and by their mutual agreement represented an historical moment in the leadership of the SED. It argued that this was an historic moment, furthermore, because the "Common Paper" forced the SED leadership to decide whether it would follow the reforms of Gorbachev.<sup>42</sup> As mentioned earlier, and argued by members within the SPD,<sup>43</sup> the connection between Gorbachev's reform policies and the principles of the "Common Paper" is an important part of the SPD's defense in their relationship with the SED. Therefore, it would prove helpful to examine the relationship between Moscow and the GDR in the period from 1987 until 1989. It can be observed that rejection of Gorbachev's reforms was also a rejection of many of the "Common Paper's" principles. Thus the SPD argued that during this period, the reform from the East was more persuasive within the SED leadership because of the SPD-SED agreement in 1987.

In April 1987 an East German official for the first time publicly addressed the question of a GDR response to Soviet reforms. In an interview in West Germany's largest circulation news weekly, *Stern*, Kurt Hager made clear that East Berlin had no interest in following the Soviet lead in *glasnost* and *perestroika*. When asked whether the East German Communist party would eventually emulate Soviet-style

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>42</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1104.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

reforms in the GDR, Hager snapped: "Just because your neighbor puts up new wallpaper, does that mean you'd feel obliged to do the same?"<sup>44</sup> Gorbachev's indirect response to Hager's remark that the Soviets were not merely changing wallpaper but were involved instead in the fundamental reconstruction of their home reflected the seriousness with which Hager's comments were taken in Moscow.<sup>45</sup> Kurt Hager's October 1987 citation of the "sensible dividing line of the two social systems and military alliances"<sup>46</sup> also drew Moscow's attention to the urgent geopolitical dictates safeguarded by the perpetuation of East Germany's existing political structure in its unchanged form.

As the Soviet leader elaborated his conviction that economic reform could not be effective without accompanying political steps at the January 1987 Soviet Communist Party Plenum, SED rhetoric asserted that the GDR's prosperity exempted itself from the political reforms under discussion in the Soviet Union, stressing that the essential features of "socialist democracy" had been a part of the East German landscape at least since Honecker's accession to the GDR's highest office. In addition, *Neues Deutschland* printed support for this position in the form of comments by various Soviet officials, such as by Soviet Party Secretary for International Relations Anatoliy Dobrynin: "We are realizing our restructuring in accordance with the conditions and requirements of our country. We do not have the smallest intention of offering it as a suitable recipe for all."<sup>47</sup> The SED thus took the novel approach of sporting a "Euro-Communist" motif to justify the SED's polite but unmistakable distancing from Gorbachev's agenda.

In 1988, SED autonomy from Moscow had strengthened its will to stifle the activities of East Germans pressing for reform. However, the link between the SED's resistance to Gorbachev's program and the need to offer dispensations to the GDR populace, notably in the travel sphere, continued. Like most SED measures in the last half of the decade, the reform dimensions of this instrument were for the most part cosmetic: the requirement that authorities approve travel to

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<sup>44</sup>Now famous interview with Kurt Hager, *Stern*, 9 April 1987.

<sup>45</sup>See Norman M. Naimark, "Soviet-GDR Relations: An Historical Overview," *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, no. 51, 1989, p. 19; See also Fred Oldenburg, "The Impact of Gorbachev's Reform in the GDR," *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, no. 25, 1988, pp. 9-11.

<sup>46</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 28 October, 1987.

<sup>47</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 15 April, 1988.

the FRG on a case-by-case basis was not withdrawn.<sup>48</sup> The regime's enactment of a new travel ordinance nevertheless underscored its recognition of the continued importance of inner-German travel as a safety valve to deflect internal pressures for economic and political liberalization, no matter how belated or ineffectual.

The SED's ideological uniformity at the highest level, the absence of clearly superior Communist economic models from which to borrow, and the likelihood that genuine economic reform would make an orthodox *Politbüro* irrelevant, encouraged the Honecker leadership to side-step *perestroika*. Both Gorbachev's lack of clarity on the permissible limits of reform in the GDR and the Soviet general secretary's inability to assemble a workable *Politbüro* "counter-élite" allowed Honecker and his allies to perpetuate this hard-line. Moscow's concentration on internal emergencies by 1988 aided the unity socialists' anti-reform measures even while such practices raised the level of popular frustration in the GDR. Otto Reinhold explained the GDR's view on any deviation from the tenets of Marxist-Leninist economic planning:

In the world of socialism it has come about from time to time that unsuccessful attempts have been made to guarantee the inseparable connection between economic and social policy through pricing or salary policies. The unity of economic and social policy cannot be achieved through the principles of the so-called market economy.<sup>49</sup>

On the same level, Honecker's wife Margot, a Central Committee member and GDR minister of education, called for stiff resistance to any and all attempts at tampering with existing socialism in the GDR. In a speech to young pioneer leaders in Dresden, Mrs. Honecker called for a renewed commitment to "socialist patriotism," consisting of tireless work in the party, "without ifs and buts for the GDR fatherland." The great tasks set before GDR society could never be tackled, in her words, "without a firm socialist awareness, without an unshakable class standpoint." Her husband followed up, remarking specifically on Soviet reform in an interview with a Danish newspaper. It was not the case, according to Honecker, that the GDR no longer had anything to learn from the Soviet Union. All Socialist countries continued to learn from each other. But there was no such thing, in

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<sup>48</sup>*Deutschland Archiv*, January 1989, p. 126.

<sup>49</sup>Quoted in "Honecker kritisiert Lieferkürzungen der Sowjetunion" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 5 December, 1988.



Honecker's view, as a "prescription" or "model" that one country would copy from another.<sup>50</sup>

The East German Communists' frustration with Soviet behavior became increasingly evident. "As if to mock" events in the Soviet Union, observed the *Wall Street Journal*, the East German party rehabilitated East Germany's Stalinist Walter Ulbricht, who had otherwise been erased from the Communist party's memory since Honecker assumed leadership in 1971.<sup>51</sup> Honecker himself, while carefully reaffirming the GDR's support for the policies of the Soviet Communist party in general, began to lash out publicly at specific byproducts of Moscow's new thinking. The rehabilitation of Stalin's enemies in the Soviet Union was, for example, according to Honecker "the croaking of the petit bourgeois run wild."<sup>52</sup> In November 1988 Honecker staged a extravagant summit in East Berlin with another Gorbachev nemesis, Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who received the prestigious Karl Marx Order from the East German Communist general secretary.

East German Communist theorist Otto Reinhold acknowledged the growing "discussion among social scientists in socialist countries as to whether there are not in socialism differences in pace of development characterized by periods of stagnation and periods of basic restructuring prophecies." But Reinhold unambiguously stated that "we reject such a concept." Addressing more specifically the issue of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union, Reinhold boasted that because the East German economy was far more successful than the Soviet economy, it had no need for renewal or restructuring. In addition, Reinhold rejected out of hand recent claims by Hungarian authorities that unemployment should be accepted as an inevitable part of the reform process of Socialist economies.<sup>53</sup>

Honecker's trip to the Soviet Union in 1989 did little to mend deteriorating relations with the Kremlin. Rather than attempt conciliation with Soviet reformers,

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<sup>50</sup>Interview with Erich Honecker, "Jyllands Posten," *Deutschland Archiv*, May 1988, pp. 569-570.

<sup>51</sup>Barry Newman, "East Berlin Leaders Recoil from Glastnost," *Wall Street Journal*, 31 January, 1989.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup>Henry Kamm, "East German Theorist Rejects Soviet-Style Change," *New York Times*, 28 February, 1989.

Honecker simply demonstrated his own obstinacy. In a June 1989 speech at a rally in Magnitogorsk, the industrial city where he had once worked as a young Communist in 1931, the East German leader unambiguously expressed his complete satisfaction with existing socialism in the GDR.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of July 1989, *Neues Deutschland* surprisingly published an interview with Hungary's reform-minded Communist leader Karoly Grosz, a decision that may have suggested a grudging acceptance of the right of the Hungarians to follow their own unorthodox course.<sup>55</sup> Yet, the GDR still rejected any deviation from its own course. In an article published in the party's theoretical journal, *Die Einheit*, Hager outlined East Germany's course for "socialism in the colors of the GDR." Hager rejected experimentation with aspects of the market economy and in foreign policy ruled out anything but the traditional forms of peaceful coexistence with the "imperialist" West. He observed what he characterized as "strong reactionary trends" in West Germany, which were whipping up a dangerous "attack on socialism."<sup>56</sup>

Although the SED elite viewed *glasnost* and *perestroika* as incompatible with the continued leading role of the party, it was equally foreseeable that their abject failure in the Soviet Union would produce consequences beyond the mere departure of Mikhail Gorbachev. Manfred Uschner explains that it was nothing "but faulty speculation by the SED leadership to believe, 'with its bottom on the edge of the chair, that it could out survive Gorbachev'" (*mit dem Hintern auf der Stuhlkante Gorbatschow überleben zu können*).<sup>57</sup>

## GDR Opposition Movements

The next section of the "Five Years Later" document dealt with the effects of the "Common Paper." The document stated that the "Common Paper" was "greeted by the opposition groups within the GDR as a catalyst to move the SED toward

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<sup>54</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 3 July, 1989.

<sup>55</sup>"Ungarische Reformpolitik in der SED-Press; interview von 'Neues Deutschland' mit Parteichef Grosz," *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, 1 August, 1989.

<sup>56</sup>"Hager Comments on Development of Socialism," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 19 July, 1989, pp. 23-26.

<sup>57</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 145.

reform."<sup>58</sup> It was thus argued that the "Common Paper" itself was used by the opposition groups within the GDR to further their claims for human rights. In backing up their assertion, the Social Democrats cited the fact that the minutes of a Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung convention regarding the "Common Paper" were confiscated by the East German government in November 1987 so that they could not be published in the underground newspaper *Grenzfall*.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, after the arrests surrounding the demonstrations of the Luxemburg-Liebkecht Demonstrations, the ecologist Wismar wrote to both the SPD and the *Politbüro* of the SED and demanded "compliance with the spirit of the document" (Common Paper).<sup>60</sup> Thus, for the SPD, this reference indicated the significance of the principles of the "Common Paper." The "Five Years Later" document went on to state that it was greeted likewise in the Protestant church for the same reasons. The "Five Years Later" document then cited examples of members of the leadership in the Protestant church like Bishop Leich who praised its "new thinking." Wolfgang Thierse also emphasized the "considerable impact" that the "Common Paper" had on citizens of the GDR.<sup>61</sup>

The argument that the "Common Paper" contributed to the opposition movement within the East is the most impassioned assertion by the SPD in the "Five Years Later" document.<sup>62</sup> As Egon Bahr explained, the SPD could not cooperate directly with the dissidents within the GDR because "the *Stasi* was too powerful."<sup>63</sup> Moreover, because of this powerful state security apparatus, the opposition movement was much smaller than in other East European states. Therefore, the SPD again relies on the ideological argument for its influence. Examining the GDR's strict state control in relation to the opposition movement allows one to gain a better perspective on the SPD's arguments. These arguments center around the assertion that indeed it was internal SED change and not the opposition movements which contributed to a non-violent transition in the GDR.

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<sup>58</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1104.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1105.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>"Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August, 1992.

<sup>62</sup>For a review of this assertion see "Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August, 1992.

<sup>63</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

Clearly, the GDR's opposition movement paled in significance in comparison with Solidarity in Poland or Charter 77, the human rights organization that had carved out a niche for itself in Czechoslovakia. This was because of the proficiency of the GDR's Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*) and its astonishingly well-crafted surveillance apparatus.<sup>64</sup> Under Erich Mielke, the elderly general and *Politbüro* member in charge of state security since 1957, the *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit* (colloquially known as the *Stasi*) was staffed at its peak by at least 85,000 full-time employees who managed the thirty-nine departments headquartered in the massive office complex in the Normannenstrasse in East Berlin. In addition to its core staff, the *Stasi* empire included an estimated 109,000 active informers and 500,000 to 2 million part-time informers,<sup>65</sup> as well as over 2,000 properties, an arsenal of weapons, and a budget envied by even the best intelligence services in the West.<sup>66</sup>

In line with Mielke's conviction that "everyone is a potential security risk,"<sup>67</sup> the "Shield and Sword" of the party went to extraordinary lengths to ensure the integrity of the East German state against anti-Socialist subversion. Factories, offices, homes, restaurants, concert halls, gas stations, even confessionals in Catholic churches, nowhere was immune from the eyes and the ears of the *Stasi*. More than 2,000 people were employed full time to censor mail and another 1,500 to monitor telephone calls.<sup>68</sup> The *Stasi* maintained an estimated 4 million files on GDR citizens, about one-third of the state's adult population, with an additional 2 million files on citizens of the Federal Republic.<sup>69</sup>

However, recognizing the apparent opportunity offered by the "Common Paper" and Gorbachev's new thinking,<sup>70</sup> East German dissidents pushed their agenda with ever-increasing confidence. In 1987, as public protests became more frequent, church groups began delivering appeals for assistance to the Soviet

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<sup>64</sup>Egon Bahr stressed this point in commenting on the significance of the "Common Paper" in relation to opposition movements. Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Steve Emerson, "Where Have All the Spies Gone," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 August, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>66</sup>See "Destasifying Germany: The Undergrowth of Evil," *The Economist*, 1 December, 1990, p. 19.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>See Jeffrey Gedmin, "Reconstructing Germany," *World Affairs*, Spring 1990, p. 192.



Embassy in East Berlin addressed to the Kremlin leader.<sup>71</sup> In June of that year, when East German police forcibly dispersed hundreds of rock fans crowded near the Brandenburg Gate to hear music from a concert on the west side of the Berlin Wall, youths began singing the "Internationale," shouting "*Die Mauer muss weg*" (The Wall must go) and chanting Gorbachev's name.

When police stormed the rectory of East Berlin's Zion Church in November 1987 to confiscate underground publications,<sup>72</sup> *Neues Deutschland* carefully assigned blame for the incident to "fascist hooligans ... controlled from West Berlin."<sup>73</sup> Yet, notably, much of the impetus for East German dissident action now clearly stemmed from the East, not the West. It is true that opposition groups within the GDR were not prominent as in other socialist nations; however, political parties in West Germany could have been seen to almost go out of their way to avoid contact with them. For example, when some younger members of the Social Democratic Party called upon their party's leadership to expand its contacts with the East to include parallel channels of communication with the newly emerging social and political forces in the GDR, their senior colleagues, all veterans of the early *Ostpolitik*, vetoed the idea, arguing that the SPD had no legitimate discussion partners outside of the SED élite.<sup>74</sup>

In March 1988, while the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was meeting in Vienna, East German dissidents took their efforts abroad, joining dissidents from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union in an appeal for conscientious objector status in their countries.<sup>75</sup> That GDR citizens were now coordinating their efforts with dissidents elsewhere in the bloc was a particularly disturbing development for the Honecker regime and orthodox rulers elsewhere in the bloc. On 15 January 1989, the same day the CSCE accord was adopted, some 190 pro-democracy activists were arrested in Leipzig.

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<sup>71</sup>"Pacifists Praise 'Great Echo' of Gorbachev's Reforms," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 1 June, 1987, p. G1.

<sup>72</sup>Thomas F. O'Boyle, "Winds of Change Coming from Moscow Stir Hopes for Liberty in East Germany," *Wall Street Journal*, 19 February, 1988.

<sup>73</sup>"Commentary Denounces 'Glasnost,'" *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 3 February, 1988, p. 10.

<sup>74</sup>See Gunter Hofmann, "Ich bin doch auch nur ein Mensch," *Die Zeit*, 12 February, 1988.

<sup>75</sup>John Tagliabue, "In East Bloc, an Expanding Network of Dissenters," *New York Times*, 22 March, 1988.

During the summer of 1989, a series of dissident actions and repressive government counter-measures continued to heighten the tension in the GDR. At a demonstration on 7 July, participants were dispatched with violence by more than 1,000 members of the state security organs patrolling Alexander Square in East Berlin. The West German ZDF television crew was forced from the scene, their cameras sprayed with varnish by *Stasi* officers to prevent filming of the event.<sup>76</sup>

By and large "reform movements" in the GDR were closely scrutinized and allowed to proceed only when they met the criteria of the *Stasi*. For example, Martin Kirchner, general secretary of East Germany's Christian Democratic party, had collaborated with the *Stasi* for at least fifteen years while serving as a member of the Lutheran Church High Consistory in Thuringia.<sup>77</sup> Other *Stasi* affiliations from the opposition movement in 1989 and 1990 included *Democratic Awakening* leader Wolfgang Schnur and the Social Democrat's chairman Ibrahim Böhme, both forced to resign in the aftermath of the revolution. Even the leader of the East German Christian Democrats, Lothar de Maizière, who became the GDR's first elected prime minister in March 1990, was forced from office after allegations that he too had cooperated with the *Stasi*.<sup>78</sup>

The "Five Years Later" document asserted that the SED leadership was more hostile than other Eastern European Communist parties to internal dissenters. Thus the room for true opposition groups in the GDR was scant. Furthermore, many of the opposition leaders had been deported to the FRG. Thus the document declared that one should not overrate the success of the opposition groups in the GDR. "With all respect to their courage, a wide opposition-movement, as with Solidarity in Poland, could not originate in the GDR." It then stated that it was the exodus of GDR citizens to the West that brought about the downfall of the GDR. Moreover, "one of the parts of the story that many have forgotten was the internal struggle within the SED leadership." Thus the document reasserted that it was internal SED reform created and influenced by the "Common Paper," and not the opposition from within the GDR that allowed for a peaceful transition process.

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<sup>76</sup>"ZDF Prevented from Filming," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 10 July, 1989, p. 22.

<sup>77</sup>See "East German CDU Chairman Resigns," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 155, 16 August, 1990, pp. 1-2.

<sup>78</sup>Anyone who cooperated with the *Stasi* was colloquially categorized as an "IM" or *Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter*.

## Reform Socialism

As Manfred Uschner explains, the citizens of the GDR recognized the difference between theory and propaganda on one hand, and the everyday practices of its government on the other; the perversion of the GDR government and what was "real socialism" (*realer Sozialismus*).<sup>79</sup> Opposition in the GDR, prior to the general revolt from below, had occurred, for the most part, within artistic and intellectual circles. An understanding of this is important in analyzing the mentality of the Social Democrats and their relationship with the East German state. For the most part, the SPD seemed to have been in agreement with this sort of reform. This can be argued on the basis that the "Common Paper" argued, not just for the GDR's reform and peace capability (*Reformfähigkeit* and *Friedensfähigkeit* respectively), but also its right to exist (*Existenzberechtigung*). Thus in examining the reform process espoused by leading GDR and ex-GDR figures, one can comprehend the corresponding position held by SPD leaders in the late 1980s. The SPD was forced to pursue this pattern of reform for two reasons. Firstly, the SPD indeed desired reform, but they had come to the conclusion that the two Germanies would exist for many years to come. Secondly, by desiring reform from above, the SPD had, in effect, placed all its eggs in one basket, i.e., reform of the GDR through its leadership and the state apparatus associated with it.

In the 1970s, the most visible symbol of East German dissent was the poet and songwriter Wolf Biermann. Biermann had left Hamburg in 1953 to take up citizenship in the GDR to devote his life's work, in his words, "to the purpose of advancing the development of a socialist workers' democracy."<sup>80</sup> Nearly two decades later, during a West German concert tour in 1976, Biermann was accused by party officials of slandering the Socialist state and prevented from returning home to the GDR. Biermann became a hero to many East German Marxist dissenters who wished to remain in the GDR and work for change. In the weeks and months following his expulsion, a number of writers, artists, and church activists were jailed for protesting against the state action against Biermann.

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<sup>79</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 144.

<sup>80</sup>Quoted in Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Nascent Civil Society in the German Democratic Republic," *Problems of Communism*, March-June 1989, p. 93.

Among those placed under house arrest for several weeks was Biermann's mentor, physicist Robert Havemann, who in a sense also served as mentor for an entire generation of Marxist intellectuals in the GDR. From the time of his simultaneous expulsion from the party and dismissal from Humboldt University in East Berlin in 1964 until his death in 1982, Havemann had been perhaps the most articulate spokesman for reform socialism in the GDR. Havemann maintained that the flaw of Stalinism was not only the repressive domination and control of all critical and oppositional tendencies in society but also the structure of the Stalinist-style economy.<sup>81</sup>

A voice of criticism still closer to the party apparatus in the 1970s was that of Rudolf Bahro. Bahro had been sentenced to eight years in prison in 1978 for his dissident essay *Die Alternative* (published in the West in 1977) but was permitted to emigrate to the Federal Republic the next year, where he later emerged as a leader of the West German Green party. Like Havemann, Bahro, who claimed that "Communism is not only necessary [but] possible," became a source of moral authority and encouragement to a large portion of East Germany's Marxist dissidents.<sup>82</sup> Bahro, a member of the East German Communist party since 1954, had edited several newspapers, including *Forum*, and the party's youth arm, *Freie Deutsche Jugend*. With the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Bahro broke with the East German Communists which eventually culminated in *Die Alternative*. Many GDR dissidents drew on the foundation and inspiration provided by Biermann, Havemann, and Bahro. In the summer of 1986, a dissident group calling itself "Initiative for Peace and Human Rights" began publishing a bulletin, at first sporadically, later monthly, entitled *Grenzfall*. In 1987 another independent publication, *Umweltblätter*, appeared.

Likewise, writer Stephan Hermlin considered Gorbachev's policies "a second October revolution," a historical occurrence the GDR could not possibly ignore.<sup>83</sup> Hermlin was a senior party loyalist among the GDR's intelligentsia and a member of the East German Communist party since 1947. He believed that a policy of

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<sup>81</sup>Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Opposition und Widerstand in der DDR: Ein Politischer Report*, 1984, p. 177.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p.181.

<sup>83</sup>"Wir brauchen vor allem Glastnost; Der DDR-Schriftsteller Stephen Hermlin über die Reformfähigkeit des SED-Staats," interview with Stephen Hermlin in *Der Spiegel*, 6 February, 1989.



"openness," was essential to the strengthening of socialism. Hermlin argued that not everyone in the leadership supported Honecker's rejection of Gorbachev's course.<sup>84</sup> His appeal to GDR citizens for "one to two years credit" in patience implied an expected change in course by the next Party Congress scheduled for spring 1991.<sup>85</sup> Hermlin was optimistic that, contrary to Honecker's personal assessment, the Berlin Wall might in the foreseeable future be rendered superfluous.<sup>86</sup>

Peace activist Bärbel Bohley, later a co-founder of the opposition group New Forum in 1989, rejected the idea that "the GDR should . . . follow the capitalist path. We want the situation in the GDR to change," she told an interviewer in October 1989. "A permeable border-yes; freedom to travel-yes; but reunification-no."<sup>87</sup> It was her own personal tragedy, Bohley later mused, that "I did not want to go to the West, but that the West is now coming to me."<sup>88</sup> This sentiment was shared by novelist Christa Wolf. Expelled from the party over her protest of Biermann's expulsion, Wolf had received attention for, among other things, her advocacy of unilateral disarmament by the Warsaw Pact. In the fall of 1989, Wolf joined Bohley in appealing for a patient process of reform in East Germany that would circumvent unification by fostering a new "development of socialism" in the GDR.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, demonstrations in the late 1980s were not only carried out by public dissenters within the GDR, but also by those, like the aforementioned, who called for reform of the existing system and not its demise. For example, in January 1988, two months after the police action at the Zion Church, at an official rally in remembrance of the murder of two founders of the German Communist party, Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919) and Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919), East German

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>85</sup>Ilse Spittmann, "SED setzt auf Zeitgewinn," *Deutschland Archiv*, June 1988, p. 689.

<sup>86</sup>"Wir brauchen vor allem Glastnost; Der DDR-Schriftsteller Stephen Hermlin über die Reformfähigkeit des SED-Staats," interview with Stephen Hermlin in *Der Spiegel*, 6 February, 1989.

<sup>87</sup>"'New Forum' Continues as 'Citizens' Initiative,'" *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 11 October, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup>Quoted in Ernst Elitz, *Sie waren dabei: Ost-deutsche Profile von Bärbel Bohley zu Lothar de Maizière*, 1991, p. 28.

<sup>89</sup>"Writers Ask 'Democratic Dialogue at All Levels,'" *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 25 September, 1989, p. 23.

dissidents prepared a counter-demonstration of a size unprecedented in recent GDR history. Hundreds of demonstrators carried banners with slogans calling for freedom of travel and Rosa Luxemburg's assertion that "freedom is only freedom for those who think differently." Many of the leaders at the march were not anti-Communists but Gorbachev sympathizers. Yet the East German Communists viewed strict ideological vigilance to be of utmost importance, especially at a time when "imperialism's" goal to liquidate socialism was said to remain firmly in place.<sup>90</sup> The *Stasi* moved swiftly, arresting scores of dissidents, many of whom never managed to leave their apartments on the day of the event. Some of the arrested demonstrators were *Ausreisewillige*, those who sought emigration. But many, and in particular the organizers, were dissidents who wished to remain in the GDR and work for change from within. It was at this core of would-be GDR reformers that the regime struck most vigorously, expelling dozens from the country. For example, peace activist and Protestant minister from East Berlin Rainer Eppelmann, later minister of disarmament and defense in the GDR's elected government, demonstrated his own sympathy with reform socialism and the preservation of a separate East German state. He deplored the fact that so many people were leaving East Germany, the very people who, in his view, would be urgently needed for the GDR's restructuring in the coming years.<sup>91</sup> As with many East German intellectuals, Eppelmann called for reform within the GDR; however, he was steadfast in his belief in Socialism and a separate German socialist state. Eppelmann signed a resolution with a group of civil rights activists and members of the Free Democratic party of Lower Saxony calling for "an independent and joint German identity." In Eppelmann's words such a resolution would affirm that while Germans "share the same history, language, and culture," they respect "the differences between the two countries."<sup>92</sup>

The church's influence on the dissident movement it sheltered was not insignificant. Partly as a result of the Socialist-oriented atmosphere in church-sponsored forums, the GDR's political opposition developed a basically "loyalist

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<sup>90</sup>"Zum 17. Januar und den Folgen," *Deutschland Archiv*, April 1988, p. 431.

<sup>91</sup>"Pastor on Problem of Citizens Leaving Country," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 21 August, 1989, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup>"Priest Interviewed on Resolution with FDP," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 18 August, 1989, p. 22.

approach," refusing to "challenge the legitimacy of the existing regime."<sup>93</sup> For example, Thuringian Bishop Werner Leich, in his role as chairman of the Conference of Evangelical Church Leadership, had assured Erich Honecker in March 1988 that his congregation "in no way intended to turn away from the forms of socialist society."<sup>94</sup> In the summer of 1988, church congresses held in Halle and Rostock issued twenty theses for domestic policy renewal in the GDR, a direct response to the reformist impulses generated from inside the Soviet Union.<sup>95</sup> The regime responded by attempting to restrict the church's politically-linked activities.<sup>96</sup>

In a June 1989 interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Manfred Stolpe, as president of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR, appealed for respect of the Helsinki process whose Final Act bound Western signatories, including West Germany, to accept the "existing European community of states, including the two German states."<sup>97</sup> As a Socialist-minded reformer, Stolpe later assumed a leading role as a political organizer for proponents of a "third way" during the East German revolution.

### Repression of the Press

The "Five Years Later" document also dealt with the subject of the SED "retraction" of the principles of the "Common Paper." The document explained that after the 1987 visit by Honecker to the FRG, "the SED leadership, who were already anxious, became fearful of their own change."<sup>98</sup> The document then explained that this "retraction" came in the form of Kurt Hager's speech on 28 October 1987 in which he interpreted the "Common Paper" in a way that the SPD "never intended." "He renewed the old enemy images and disputed, as in previous

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<sup>93</sup>Vladimir Tismaneanu, "Nascent Civil Society in the German Democratic Republic," *Problems of Communism*, March-June 1989, p. 90.

<sup>94</sup>"Dialog zwischen Kirche und Staat" (Letter from Bishop Werner Leich to Erich Honecker), *Deutschland Archiv*, April 1988, p. 457.

<sup>95</sup>"Church Urges SED to Change Domestic Policy," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 1 July, 1988, pp. 28-29.

<sup>96</sup>See "Unbotmässiges von 'Grenzfall' bis 'Wendezeit'" *Deutschland Archiv*, November 1988, pp. 1188-1196.

<sup>97</sup>"Stolpe Speaks on Domestic, Foreign Issues," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 20 June, 1989, p. 40.

<sup>98</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1106.

times, that the West could be capable of reform."<sup>99</sup> He also contradicted the human rights references in the "Common Paper" which, the document stated, led to the November 1987 search of the environmental library in Berlin and the confiscation of dissident materials. The document also stressed that the SED regime continued to tighten its grip on the citizens of the GDR with its prohibition of the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* in "violation of the 'Common Paper's reference to the openness of the press."<sup>100</sup> This critical commentary was obligatory within the "Five Years Later" document because of the concentration on this issue within the "Common Paper." Indeed, the foundation on which the "Common Paper" was built centered around a free and open dialogue, both internally in the respective states, as well as between them. The document then stated, "*Wer den Dialog im Inneren verweigert, gefährdet auch den nach außen*" (Whoever refuses the internal dialogue, also endangers the dialogue outside).<sup>101</sup> Despite the fact that the dialogue between the two parties continued, the SPD stated frankly that this refusal by the GDR to engage in open dialogue and support a free press spoiled the relationship.

The SED increased its state of ideological vigilance in the late 1980s with censorship of the written and spoken word despite the fact that the "Common Paper" "obligated the SED to take part in reform and a free dialogue" and to allow free thought which included dissent (*Andersdenken*).<sup>102</sup> Moreover, GDR officials stepped up censorship of material from other Socialist countries; Gorbachev's Soviet Union was at the top of the list. This was indeed ironic. With the exception of the GDR's southeastern corner around Dresden (colloquially known as the "valley of the unknowing"), some 85 percent of the East German populace could follow the progress of Gorbachev's reform movement in great and textured detail every day via West German television. Nevertheless, this access to the news did not stop GDR officials from busying themselves futilely with the careful editing of speeches and articles by Soviet and other Eastern bloc reformers before dissemination inside East Germany.

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 143.



When, for example, in May 1988 Janos Kadar was ousted in Hungary after thirty-two years as Communist party chief, the GDR media paid scant attention to the transition, offering virtually no commentary. Moreover, the East German press failed altogether to report that eight of thirteen *Politbüro* members had been replaced (new members were simply listed without comment) and that the 108-member Central Committee had accepted 33 new members.<sup>103</sup> In June, censors shifted their sights to the remarks of West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who sought to make the most of the new atmosphere in the bloc generated by Kremlin reformers. *Neues Deutschland* insisted on striking offending passages from Genscher's speech at a conference in Potsdam, with references to the "German nation," "human rights," the "Berlin Wall," and "travel restrictions."<sup>104</sup> Still, Moscow remained Honecker's worst problem, not Bonn. The catalyst of the first East German-Soviet dispute of serious consequence came in October 1988 with the appearance of an issue of *Sputnik*, a German-language monthly digest of the Soviet press. The issue of *Sputnik* in question featured an historical essay that raised questions about German Communist culpability for Hitler's rise to power. This accusation, according to astonished editors at *Neues Deutschland*, was usually heard from quite a different end of the political spectrum.<sup>105</sup> Honecker and Hermann Axen who were in Nazi prisons and concentration camps were reportedly furious over this Soviet commentary on the history of the German Communists during the Hitler period. Kurt Hager stated that the East German Communists "saw no reason to undertake a search for 'blank spots' in official history." Hager referred specifically to the alleged "errors" of the German Communist party during the Weimar Republic, a topic that in his view had already been sufficiently analyzed by party historians.<sup>106</sup> This led to increased control over publications and a cancellation of the November international church conference and a December censorship of church weeklies in response to the Lutheran churches' increasing advocacy of governmental respect for civil and human rights, including the right to emigrate.

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<sup>103</sup>"Press Plays Down Extent of Change in Hungary," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 25 May, 1988, p. 16.

<sup>104</sup>"Neues Deutschland Deletes Genscher Comments on Rights, Wall," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 15 June, 1988, p. 19.

<sup>105</sup>The article argued that had the German Communists joined the Social Democrats in opposing Hitler, the dictator would have not been able to win the Reichstag elections and history would have run a different course. See "Die DDR und der 'Sputnik,'" *Neues Deutschland*, 2 November, 1988

<sup>106</sup>*Neues Deutschland*, 10 June, 1988.

The case of *Sputnik*, however, was the first instance of an outright GDR ban of a Soviet publication. The *Sputnik* decision proved enormously important, not only because it prompted open dispute between East Berlin and Moscow, but also for dissent within the GDR. East Berlin's ban on *Sputnik* was followed by a flurry of ideologically protective measures leveled against the Soviet Union. Initially, five Soviet films were withdrawn from GDR movie theaters.<sup>107</sup> Ironically, while the East German press launched a diatribe against Tengiz Abuladze's "Repentance" (a satire on the excesses of the Stalinist period), GDR citizens were still able to judge the much discussed Soviet film themselves on West German television. As Jeffrey Gedmin explained, "[v]isibly irritated by the Kremlin's apparent wide range of "new thinking" in domestic and foreign policy, East Germany launched a full-scale antireform (*sic*) campaign. In 1988, GDR censors banned *Sputnik*,...as well as a number of Soviet films."<sup>108</sup>

Furthermore, the February issue of the Soviet German-language publication *Neue Zeit* was not permitted by East German censors to circulate in the GDR because it included an interview with Polish Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.<sup>109</sup> In the spring of 1989, the pace of GDR-Soviet conflict intensified. In March, GDR authorities refused to grant permission for an exhibition of work by an East German painter, Joachim Buhlmann, which was to be held on a Soviet military base near Potsdam. The exhibition, to which some 100 East German guests had been invited, was entitled "*Glasnost* and *Perestroika* in the Name of Gorbachev." Invitations to the event had been provocatively inscribed with the words: "Gorbachev, the messenger of hope, the liberator from fear."<sup>110</sup>

Although Uschner stated that the "Common Paper" and all of its ancillary effects had penetrated the SED leadership,<sup>111</sup> the neutral ground between adoption of at least minimal steps toward reform and continued support for traditional socialist bureaucratic centralism had disappeared by 1989, and this state of affairs was

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<sup>107</sup>"Sowjetische Filme in der DDR wieder freigegeben," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 22 February, 1989.

<sup>108</sup>Jeffrey Gedmin, "Reconstructing Germany," *World Affairs*, Spring 1990, p. 192.

<sup>109</sup>*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 14 March, 1989.

<sup>110</sup>"Kein Herz für Gorbatschow: DDR-Behörden verhindern Ausstellung in Sowjetischer Kaserne," *Die Welt*, 1 April, 1989.

<sup>111</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 144.

continuously confirmed in the SED élite's steadfast censorship of critical information.

### Internal SED Struggle

The "Common Paper" "we know," quoted the "Five Years Later" document "reinforced the internal [SED] discussion ... and created difficulties for the SED leadership." Moreover, "it brought the ideas of Gorbachev forward."<sup>112</sup> Yet, this, it argued, did not prevent the SED party-leadership from presenting a "rather tactical interpretation" of the publication. Furthermore, prominent members of the SED received "party-order penalties" after they admitted exactly what the "Common Paper" demanded.<sup>113</sup> The "Five Years Later" document then explained how this internal reform, as documented by former SED members Rolf Reißig and Manfred Uschner, contributed to "break the dogmatic confidence of the state-party" so that in the fall of 1989, as mentioned earlier, the regime decided against the "Chinese solution" at the crucial moment of decision when dealing with the radical change within the GDR.<sup>114</sup>

There is keen debate amongst scholars whether the "Common Paper" pledging peaceful competition and democracy had an impact on the internal politics of the SED. In her article entitled *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue*, Ann Phillips argues that such a impact existed.<sup>115</sup> Written prior to the momentous developments of 1989-90, she asserted that the "SED was in the forefront of 'new thinking' on foreign policy ... [and] continued to offer fresh interpretations of basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and to take unexpected risks by engaging in the dialogue."<sup>116</sup> Yet particularly, she highlighted the ability of the SED to manipulate the German-German relationship. She argued that the SED carried out a two-pronged policy of limiting the damage between the two German governments on one hand, while promoting initiatives for peace and security between the systems by dialogue with the SPD on the other.

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<sup>112</sup>"Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1105.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup>Ann L. Phillips, *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue*, Washington, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1989.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 1.

Phillips argue that each party hoped to use the dialogue to manipulate the other for its own benefit.<sup>117</sup>

Phillips asserted that discussion within the SED regarding the role of ideology was marked by distinct differences. She noted that Reinhold asserted unequivocally that a sharpening of the ideological dispute was essential towards the East German policy of peaceful coexistence.<sup>118</sup> She recounted the internal SED disagreement on the issue of ideological dispute (the basis for the "Common Paper") by detailing its divergence. She explained:

One said that conflict will not sharpen under conditions of peaceful coexistence because the search for commonalities must take precedence. Another argued that ideological coexistence was the only logical consequence of military, political, economic coexistence which peaceful coexistence entails. Others dismiss the possibility of ideological coexistence but argue in varying degrees against the sharpening of ideological conflict. According to one analysis, two new qualities of peaceful coexistence serve to relativize ideological conflict: mutual acceptance and respect coupled with cooperation to solve objective problems such as environmental pollution. At the same time, ideological differences may increase during the process of implementing agreement on general goals or principles such as the priority of peace.<sup>119</sup>

Along with varying attitudes regarding principles mentioned in the "Common Paper," Phillips stressed the dilemma raised by Heiner Müller. "Do the new rules of competition between the systems, which eliminate war and revolution and obscure the role of class struggle and ideology, enshrine the *status quo* in the interest of preserving peace." Phillips stated that for the SED, the answer must have been no. As a principle of the "Common Paper," each system alone carried the burden for internal development within its system. As was seen, and will be argued below, the internal debate within the SED was limited to its leadership. This disposition in no way prevented the surfacing of support for the new Soviet leader's intentions among sections of the party. Yet, the proponents of alternatives were neither numerous enough nor at the highest levels of GDR authority to comprise an influential minority in favor of either such radical reforms proposed

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>118</sup>Transcript of Otto Reinhold on Radio DDR, 15 September, 1988; noted in op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>119</sup>Ann L. Phillips, *Seeds of Change in the German Democratic Republic: The SED-SPD Dialogue*, Washington, American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 1989, p. 31.



by Central Committee member Imre Pozsgay in Hungary or even the more moderate proposals advanced by ex-Prime Minister Lubomir Strougal in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, "factionalism" was one of the most grievous transgressions in the eyes of the SED general secretary. Thus, the party's discussion of *Reformfähigkeit* remained limited to a few party intellectuals and indeed remained only *fähig* (capable) in the last few years of the GDR's existence.

Uschner stated that the formulas proposed within the "Common Paper" disagreed with "the political practices of the SED up until this time and also tore a deep rift through its members."<sup>120</sup> The East German regime was in no mood for outside disturbance or interference, certainly not from the Soviets, particularly if the reports in West Germany's tabloids were true that the aging Honecker was contemplating retirement following the attainment of his desperately sought-after goal: to be received in Bonn on an official visit as the GDR's head of state.<sup>121</sup> There were also rumors at this time that the virus of Soviet *glasnost* was beginning to infect the ruling *nomenklatura*. Twenty-four children of prominent GDR officials, including the nephew of the minister for state security, Erich Mielke, were said to have expressed a desire to emigrate to the Federal Republic.<sup>122</sup> Thus, the SED leadership panicked and, as Uschner explains, "pulled the emergency brake." (*zog die Notbremse*).<sup>123</sup>

While East Berlin's regime moved to counter Soviet influence inside the GDR, the regime was taking action in Moscow as well to circumvent the undesirable effects of *glasnost*. During the spring of 1989, the GDR's Foreign Ministry decided to reshuffle the personnel at the Moscow Embassy for fear of unwanted influence by Soviet agents of *perestroika*.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, party functionary since 1964, Rolf Henrich, secretary of the Collegium of State Attorneys for the district of Frankfurt/Oder, caused a disruption with the 1989 publication in the West of his book *Der vormundtschaftliche Staat* (The guardian state), an unflinching critique

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<sup>120</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 142, 144.

<sup>121</sup>"Bild: Honecker Wants to Resign Next Spring," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 2 June, 1987, p. G1.

<sup>122</sup>*Bild*, 15 June, 1987, p. 1.

<sup>123</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 144.

<sup>124</sup>"Personnel Changes in Moscow Embassy Reported," *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe*, 22 June, 1989, p. 26.

of East German socialism. Henrich was a Marxist critic of GDR socialism in the tradition of Bahro and Havemann. *Der vormundschaftliche Staat* echoed the themes of Gorbachev, i.e., the destruction of dogma, the empowerment of the individual, and the eradication of overextended oppressive bureaucracy. He supported in principle the idea of elections and openness in the press and other social institutions. Henrich's economic concept of a "third way" in economic life envisaged "free entrepreneurs" independent from the state but "who are not capitalists and do not wish to become such."<sup>125</sup>

Moreover, the editor in chief of *Neues Deutschland*, Herbert Naumann, was replaced by Wolfgang Spickermann, presumably to infuse the party paper with fresh ideological vigilance. In the summer of 1989, the party announced an effort to strengthen its "political, ideological, and organizational unity" by reviewing the 2.3 million members. (During the last such action in 1980, 944 members were found unfit and expelled.)<sup>126</sup> But Honecker's authority, it appeared, was being weakened principally by a number of party opponents with close ties to Soviet reform circles. Moreover, along with the aforementioned, Manfred Uschner adds that the reform movement in the GDR was encouraged by the "Common Paper." "The ideology paper, he stated, was a serious obstacle."<sup>127</sup>

In 1989, two years following his official retirement, Markus Wolf, the renowned East German spymaster, first publicly began to reveal his sympathies for Gorbachev's reforms, which he characterized as "very important, very right and necessary" and, not least of all, fully applicable to the GDR.<sup>128</sup> A most unlikely, although intensely valuable, Gorbachev supporter, Wolf served as East German chief of foreign espionage from 1958 until his retirement in 1987. In a January 1989 meeting with Honecker, which reportedly lasted more than an hour, Wolf asserts that he "bluntly" offered Honecker his assessment of the situation in the country: "If things go on like this, there will be an explosion."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Ehrhart Neubert, "Metaphysik des Sozialismus?" *Deutschland Archiv*, September 1989, p. 1040.

<sup>126</sup>"SED beginnt mit Parteibuch-Umtausch," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 August, 1989.

<sup>127</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 145.

<sup>128</sup>Leslie Colitt, "East Germany's Ex-Spy Chief Speaks Up for Perestroika," *Financial Times*, 15 March, 1989.

<sup>129</sup>Interview with Markus Wolf in *Stern*, 21 December, 1989.

Although Gorbachev cultivated contacts with confederates in the GDR hierarchy receptive to the need for fundamental changes in "real, existing socialism," an actual anti-Honecker cabal did not materialize until the crisis days of the autumn of 1989. The center of East German decision-making, the Central Committee's 27-member *Politbüro*, remained decisively in the general secretary's hands: excluding Honecker, only eight of its secretaries owed their appointments to the departed Ulbricht. Moreover, Honecker refused to approve the resignation of three aging *Politbüro* members in December 1988 for fear that their replacements might be Gorbachev confederates.<sup>130</sup> Until East Germans massed in the streets in late 1989, Honecker at no time faced a competing *Politbüro* faction comparable to the Zaisser-Herrnstadt and Schirdewan groupings that contested Ulbricht's external and domestic policies in 1953 and 1956, respectively.

The final section of the "Five Years Later" document discussed the ethical aspect of the "Common Paper." "All political actions happen towards a future that the participants do not know, thus errors are inevitable." The SPD asserted simply that its serious undertaking in the 1980s was vital to the internal shift in mentality within the SED and further that the gigantic security apparatus on which the SED was supported was not used precisely because of SPD involvement. Manfred Uschner adds in *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie* that the SPD pursued relations with the GDR "with concern and hope that it would penetrate the GDR leadership so that a timely course for the opening and democratization could proceed."<sup>131</sup>

When the SED moved to counter the Soviet influence inside the GDR, the regime had, in effect, counteracted any influence that the "Common Paper" could have had internally as well. Thus it can be argued that if the "Common Paper" had any influence internally, it must have been prior to the spring of 1989. It is therefore difficult to argue that the "Common Paper" and its principles had broken the dogmatic confidence of the state-party by the fall of 1989 as Uschner claimed. Thus if any influence did indeed affect the leadership's decision for a non-violent response to the radical change within the GDR it must have been external.

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<sup>130</sup>"Am Leben bleiben," *Der Spiegel*, 12 June, 1989, p. 27.

<sup>131</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 148.

Whether it was Gorbachev or Western military initiatives or a combination of these will be discussed in the next chapter; however, for the purposes of examining the events of 1987 to 1989, it seems as though the "Common Paper" influenced reform only when it can be connected to similar policies coming out of Moscow. Thus, if policies within the "Common Paper" such as "common security" can be proven to have indeed influenced Gorbachev and his policies of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, the SPD has every right to claim victory. However, if no such influence can be found, the "Common Paper" must be seen as ineffective. If the latter is the case, the SPD must answer the charges by scholars and politicians that it might have stabilized the GDR. This begs the question, were the Social Democrats effective realists or were they only incompetent idealists? The next chapter and the conclusion will attempt to address these charges and hopefully explain that they are not as cut and dried as they appear.



## *The SPD-SED Relationship and Reunification: Old and New Thinking*

### **Questioning Themselves**

The heated discussion in Germany regarding the significance and impact of the "Common Paper" culminated in September 1993. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a foundation under the auspices of the Social Democratic Party, held a conference entitled "The Eastern and German Policies of the SPD in Opposition: 1982-1989 (*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition: 1982-1989*) in which the subject of general SPD policy in the 1980s was covered.<sup>1</sup> Yet the focus of the conference centered around the contacts between the SPD and SED and, in particular, the "Common Paper." The goal of the conference was to be an "honest and open critical dialogue of the ambivalence [of the SPD's] policies and to discuss this intensively."<sup>2</sup>

As Dieter Dowe, the organizer of the conference and head of the Historical Research Center of the FES, stated, "beside proponents of the SPD's policies, adversaries of the policies were also invited to the conference."<sup>3</sup> For example amongst the guests were such foreign representatives as Janusz Reiter, ambassador to Poland, and the well-known novelist Ota Filip, both of whom were dissidents to the Communist regime. Representing the SPD were members such as the former SPD president, Hans-Jochen Vogel, Ernst Breit former DGB president, Egon Bahr, Thomas Meyer, and Karsten Voigt. Representatives of the former GDR were also present. These included, acting chairman of the SPD Wolfgang Thierse, Markus Meckel, and Stephan Hilsberg, all of whom were opposition leaders in the former GDR and helped form the SPD in East Germany.

Dieter Dowe explained that one should not simply observe, with the fall of the GDR, the end of *Ostpolitik*; rather, much more is to be seen. The different phases

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<sup>1</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, Forschungsinstitut der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Historisches Forschungszentrum, 1993; quotes and arguments taken from recordings of the conference and compiled by Dieter Dowe, head of the FES's Historical Research Center.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

and the different practices of the government (CDU) and opposition (SPD) when combined together can be seen as an effective policy towards the downfall of the East German regime. Moreover, one single phase if viewed alone would be out of context and would not be properly understood. Thus, it was the interpretation of the SPD, that a combination of its own policies along with the more conservative policies of the government which, as Dowe explained, had "won," in his estimation, the battle of the systems.<sup>4</sup> Critical assessments of the "Common Paper" were argued between two representatives, Thomas Meyer (positive), an author of the "Common Paper," and Stephen Hilsberg (negative), a former opposition leader within the GDR.<sup>5</sup>

The cornerstone of the conference hinged on five key questions which scrutinized the SPD's policies and, in this respect, the "Common Paper" as well.

1. Was the basis of the SPD's inter-German policies<sup>6</sup> aligned too strongly with the negotiations with the SED and its reform?
2. Did it place too much emphasis and calculate (*kalkulieren*) on reform from above instead of the possibility for reform from below?
3. Did the SPD "get in over their heads" in the intense relationship with the GDR instead of supporting the critical intelligentsia and opposition?
4. Did these policies have "stabilizing or unstabilizing elements" for the unjust regime?
5. Were these policies, in the current situation, a real alternative to the government's policies?<sup>7</sup>

Markus Meckel, Janusz Reiter and Ota Filip set the stage for a intensive examination when they voiced their criticism to Karsten Voigt that the inter-German policies of the SPD indeed did support the accusations mentioned in the first three questions. Dieter Dowe explained that these accusations were at the

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<sup>4</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn, 1993, p. 6.*

<sup>5</sup>Stephen Hilsberg also, in December of 1989, had refused a public appearance together with Willy Brandt and U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy for fear of giving the signal that he supported the reunification of Germany and not a separate status for each; see Peter H. Merkl, *German Unification in the European Context*, 1993, p. 126.

<sup>6</sup>Inter-German policies denotes the *Ostpolitik* and *Deutschlandpolitik* of the Social Democrats in the 1980s.

<sup>7</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn, 1993, p. 7.*

heart of the internal-SPD debates surrounding its policies of the 1980s.<sup>8</sup> He went on to explain that when he was organizing the conference a half a year earlier, he had a difficult time getting certain members of the SPD, like Karsten Voigt, to agree to join him. The first meeting of the initial SPD panel met in Münster and, according to Dowe, had difficulties in accepting the overall premise of the conference.<sup>9</sup> Voigt's original denial to participate in the discussion seems to indicate the general concern of party members of facing questions like the ones above. Furthermore, Dowe explained that the SPD members at the conference had difficulties in defending the paper because of the different meanings associated with similar terms. For example, he stated:

- Peace (*Frieden*) had a different meaning in the East than the West.
- The principles within the "Common Paper" meant different things to both sides.
- The East German population interpreted the meanings differently than in the West.
- "Democracy" in the West was "parliamentary" and in the East it was "people's."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Dowe explained that it was actually two papers: "one West and one East." This notion was also expressed by Thomas Meyer. Meyer also explained that the apprehension of many SPD members regarding this subject could be traced back to late 1987. He stated "at first we were very hesitant in our relationship with the SED, but we were quite surprised when the principles implicit in the "Common Paper" were accepted." He explained further by stating, "we then believed in change," but this belief was changed when the SED failed to reform. He added, "after 1987 we had our doubts." He stated that when he questioned the SED on their lack of human rights, all he heard was "no, we are improving it." At that time Meyer explained, he "lost all respect," and asserted, "they were no real partners anymore ... worthless."<sup>11</sup>

Burkhard Koch was able to shed some light on the reasons for East Berlin's shift in position in relation to the "Common Paper" when he stated, "it was obvious that

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<sup>8</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with Thomas Meyer, Bonn, 9 February 1995.

the paper opened up room for *Andersdenken* within the GDR, and it was for this reason that Honecker stopped the [internal] dialogue. It was security. Honecker rejected dialogue because he knew [through his Communist teachings] that a little freedom is when governments topple."<sup>12</sup> He added that Honecker had no trouble with dealing with the SPD on security issues; "it was bean counting," but the "Common Paper" "challenged the SED's entire existence ... there was always a social democratic trend within the SED and this is what Honecker feared most of all."<sup>13</sup>

## Unity Issue

In 1989 the Social Democratic Party found itself at a watershed. Because of Kohl's (CDU) and Genscher's (FDP) quick actions to embrace the growing movements towards reunification and the "systemic SPD campaigns to spread a sense of insecurity and envy in regard to ... the cost of unity,"<sup>14</sup> the ruling parties were able to take full political advantage of the openings offered by the movement in East Germany. The SPD had been more deeply affected by the division of Germany than the other parties. Before the erection of the Wall in 1961, the SPD was a party for reunification. But that changed. SPD policy, identified with Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr, became a policy of "change through *rapprochement*."<sup>15</sup> In the late 1980s, SPD Chancellor candidate Oskar Lafontaine was critical of the so called pan-German aspirations of the ruling parties. He favored a separate citizenship for the GDR and the FRG. At the very beginning of the break up of the GDR, the SPD leadership was composed of intellectuals who favored reform but separate GDR statehood. For all intents and purposes, this policy was accepted by the SPD. Then came the massive protests and in the rush to unity the SPD was left out. Willy Brandt tried to press the party to follow this movement, but Lafontaine could only stress the practical difficulties of unity.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Interview with Burkhard Koch, Berlin, 20 February 1995.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Peter H. Merkl *German Unification in the European Context*, Penn State University Press, 1993, p. 139. For a detailed explanation see chapter "Hesitating in Sight of the Goal," p. 136.

<sup>15</sup>William Paterson, "Foreign and Security Policy," in Smith, Paterson and Merkl, *Developments in West German Politics*, Macmillan, 1989, p. 202; see chapter one.

<sup>16</sup>Peter H. Merkl *German Unification in the European Context*, 1993, p. 201.



This ambivalence to the Unification Treaty (*Einigungsvertrag*) once again divided the SPD. Lafontaine opposed the treaty, but Vogel and the economic spokesman Wolfgang Roth saw this as a mistake. The episode inevitably undermined Lafontaine in the run-up to the December election of 1990, and suggested that the party was divided and uncertain.<sup>17</sup> The SPD had hoped that its support for *détente* (*Entspannung*) would become increasingly popular as Gorbachev set out to dismantle the Cold War. But they had not reckoned with the time bomb of the reunification issue. The policy known as "change through *rapprochement*" (*Wandel durch Annäherung*) was characterized by the Kohl government as "change through chumming up" (*Wandel durch Anbiederung*). And with Kohl obligating the Bundes Bank to fall in with the currency reform, the SPD was left appearing to criticize reunification. To many voters, however, reunification was a family matter.<sup>18</sup> Stephen Silvia stated that "the common wisdom [held by the SPD] that the citizens of eastern Germany would not be willing to embrace the market unabashedly, but instead would be looking for an intermediate alternative between centrally planned socialism and free market capitalism: something that most closely resembled social democracy. In fact, the common wisdom proved wrong."<sup>19</sup> For the SPD, the all-German election of December 1990 was to be a disaster. The SPD received only 239 seats in the *Bundestag* compared to the CDU/CSU with 319 which, combined with the FDP's 79, gave the coalition the clear majority.<sup>20</sup>

SPD representatives insisted that *détente* had been one of the roots for the revolutions in Eastern Europe. But the Social Democrats had not anticipated the swiftness of change. In 1989-90 they were caught unprepared for post-bloc politics. While no other German party had seen it coming, it was mainly the

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<sup>17</sup>The SPD had first reacted with confusion to Kohl's ten-point plan; Johannes Rau (1987 Chancellor candidate) and Hans-Jochen Vogel (1983 Chancellor candidate) expressed the old ingrained social democratic fears of a wave of nationalism that would come and pass them by: "We do not want to be the last to say no to unification. However, Oskar Lafontaine (1990 Chancellor candidate), Heidi Wiecezoreck-Zeul, Norbert Gansel and Horst Ehmke wanted to make SPD consent contingent on Bonn's recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, on a ban on the modernization and stationing of short-range missiles, and on continued aid to Berlin. In the end, the SPD, under Vogel and Karsten Voigt, endorsed the plan; see op. cit., pp. 126-127.

<sup>18</sup>Stephen Padgett and William Paterson, "The Rise and Fall of the West German Left," *New Left Review*, March 1991, p. 73.

<sup>19</sup>Stephen J. Silvia, "Left Behind: The Social Democratic Party in Eastern Germany," *West European Politics*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1993, p. 33; see also *Der Spiegel*, 26 March, 1990.

<sup>20</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, London Cape, 1993, p. 640.

political left that was thrown off course by events - because of *détente*'s legacy. The realism of "common security" - its strong point during the 1980s - now turned German out to be a weakness at a time when the world was seeing a fundamental change in realities. As Karsten Voigt explained, "in 1989, American Intelligence told us [SPD] that the GDR was no longer stable ... we had the facts, but some were more objective."<sup>21</sup> He would later admit that the "some" was the CDU.

The problem for the SPD was the inability of either wing of the party to formulate a coherent policy for transformation on the basis of new and unexpected realities. Karsten Voigt consented to Kohl's Ten-Point Plan; this concept was the same as that of the Social Democrats, he put on record. As a spokesman of the largest opposition party, his main concern was "that we have not formulated this concept ourselves."<sup>22</sup> His arguments were similar to those of Helmut Kohl. Voigt explained that the SPD was "philosophically not prepared for reunification." He asserted that "Lafontaine, Glotz and Ehmke had based their objection on money," but as he suggested to the author, it was much deeper than that.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to other Social Democrats, like Momper and the then candidate for Chancellorship, Lafontaine, Brandt suggested that "no guilt of any nation, however big, can be paid off by an indefinite division."<sup>24</sup> As for most SPD members of his generation, unification had always been a dream. Therefore he had no qualms with altered realities in Europe, even when he voiced the same concerns as other Social Democrats: German unification was not to be decoupled from European unity.<sup>25</sup> His was not a fundamentally alternative policy to Kohl's and Genscher's. Only, he urged a more cautious approach. Later, even Egon Bahr stated that the government had made no mistakes since October 1990 in their foreign policy.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>22</sup>Karsten Voigt in Helmut Lölhöfel, "Die SPD auf der Suche nach der verlorenen Handschrift, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 30 November 1989.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

<sup>24</sup>Willy Brandt, "Rede beim Programm-Parteitag," *Presseservice der SPD*, Berlin 18 December 1989, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, "Eine Warnung vor Entkoppelung: Zur notwendigen Verknüpfung von deutscher und europäischer Einigung," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, 13 February 1990.

<sup>26</sup>Egon Bahr, Aussöhnung statt Recht, Interview im *Freitag*, 6 December 1991.

Social Democratic idealists lamented an increasing "national hysteria" which, they thought, led some of their colleagues to succumb to the ideas of the CDU.<sup>27</sup> National unity, they insisted, did not solve any of the practical questions like economic and social instability in the GDR. In contrast to Voigt or Brandt, they rejected unification altogether in favor of pragmatic aid. They did so at a time when the most important item on the political agenda was whether Germany could be united immediately. Their concern for social questions in conjunction with a non-national rhetoric seemed to aim at cementing the existence of two Germanies. Since liberty was at the heart of Eastern European revolutions they welcomed political changes which they thought would now have to be stabilized by Western aid.<sup>28</sup> When national skeptics began to realize that the drift towards unification was too strong to be resisted they continued along the lines of what had been the party consensus in November 1989: increased practical cooperation on all levels and an eventual confederation of both states.<sup>29</sup> Then there was to be a separate referendum in East and West Germany followed by the creation of a new constitution, if the people so wished.<sup>30</sup>

The SPD in general was, therefore, at the time, unable to formulate a credible policy. It hovered between agreement with government ideas - rejecting neutrality for instance - and criticizing Kohl, Genscher and others for going too far, too quickly. Neither of the strands within the SPD was able to adapt swiftly to the realities of post-bloc politics. While CDU and FDP had made their policy changes during the early 1980s, the conceptual continuity of *détente* and "common

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<sup>27</sup>Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, "Eine Warnung vor Entkoppelung: Zur notwendigen Verknüpfung von deutscher und europäischer Einigung," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, 13 February 1990; see also Walter Momper, "Grußwort des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin beim Programm-Parteitag," *Presseservice der SPD*, Berlin, 18 December 1989, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Norbert Gansel, "Wenn alle gehen wollen, weil die Falschen bleiben ...," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 13 September 1989.; See also Gerd Walter, "Vorschlag für eine politische Einigung der Staaten in Europa" in Barthe and Johannsen, *Zur Zukunft Deutschlands: Reden vom 2. internationalen Ost-West-Workshop über Gemeinsame Sicherheit*, *Hamburger Beiträge zur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik*, Heft 44, January 1990, p. 44.

<sup>29</sup>Furthermore, at the SPD meeting on December 18-20, the party called for aid for the development of the East German infrastructure, environmental protection, transport, tourism, and approved a new comprehensive SPD program, the first time since the Bad Godesberg program of 1959. Most importantly, the new program contained a declaration of unification policy that echoed many of Kohl's points; see Peter H. Merkl *German Unification in the European Context*, 1993, p. 127.

<sup>30</sup>Ulrich Maurer, Gerd Walter, Heidi Wiczorek-Zeul, "Preußen oder Europa? Zu den historischen Chancen, die den Deutschen aus der Revolution im Osten erwachsen," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, 27 March 1990, p. 2.



security" based on bloc-to-bloc relations ended abruptly in 1989. As Egon Bahr stated, "as the break-up of the eastern system began, it surprised everyone" (*waren alle überrascht*).<sup>31</sup>

The main reason for this lack of adaptability during the late 1980s could be found in the very success of Social Democratic policies in previous years. With Gorbachev in the Kremlin, a partner for *détente* had emerged. For the first time since 1945, *rapprochement* and change appeared to become an important issue on the international agenda. For German Social Democrats, however, bloc stability and the prevention of armed conflict in Europe had become paramount. While *glasnost* and *perestroika* improved the strategic climate, the SPD demanded arms control and disarmament in order to make *détente* irreversible and the international system more stable. The SPD believed that a Western initiative to force the speed of changes in the Soviet Union could only have de-stabilized the very process. The SPD continued to proclaim that the two blocs would remain for the foreseeable future and neither side should negate the other's right to exist.<sup>32</sup> For this reason Egon Bahr would later admit, "in the fall of 1989 we still supported the interests of the Federal government not to destabilize the GDR" despite the fact that there were calls from the leaders in of the opposition for support.<sup>33</sup>

Other issues addressed by the conference members was the stance by the SPD during the break-up of the GDR. Initially the goal of the Social Democrats was reform within the GDR without its eradication. The conference members discussed this attitude along with the formation of policies which centered around the left's discomfort with the idea of the nation. Yet the representatives agreed that for the citizens of the GDR this goal, of keeping two separate states, was "unthinkable."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn, 1993, p. 36.*

<sup>32</sup>SPD-SED Common Paper, "Der Streit der Ideologien und die gemeinsame Sicherheit," reprinted in Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988.

<sup>33</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn, 1993, p. 38.*

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.



Among the representatives who discussed the nationalism issue were Herbert Ammon, from a strong national viewpoint, and Wilfried von Bredow, an earlier proponent of the "two-state solution" (*Zwei-Staaten-Lösung*). Along the same line, "the evoking of the past fears" of a united Germany was also addressed. Among other issues discussed were Germany's role in Europe and aggressive nationalism in remembrance of Willy Brandt's famous phrase "German patriots in European responsibility" (*deutsche Patrioten in europäischer Verantwortung*).<sup>35</sup>

The Social Democrats' focus on arms control and disarmament during the whole of the 1980s had yet another source. While *Ostpolitik* had been a broad political concept a decade earlier, Reagan's quest for supremacy through an immense arms build-up forced the opposition to concentrate its attention almost exclusively on this. At a time when the American administration talked publicly about limited nuclear strikes, the SPD insisted that both pillars of the Harmel Report should be implemented: defense measures and dialogue. In 1977 this dual notion led Chancellor Schmidt (SPD) to propose the installation of Pershing II and Cruise Missiles in Europe plus the beginning of negotiations about intermediate nuclear forces (INF). While he upheld both elements of NATO's eventual double-track decision (December 1979), a growing minority within his party came to see the arms race itself as the real threat (see chapter two).

The SPD then became part of the movement which criticized Reagan's policy more sharply.<sup>36</sup> The new weapon systems were increasingly seen as instruments for aggression because of their counter-force capability. "NATO is less of a defense alliance, but more of an anti-Soviet war alliance,"<sup>37</sup> leading SPD spokespersons claimed. They reflected the views of the peace movement at large. Continuing their own policy of *détente*, they focused their attention on military matters and rejected the government's policy of borrowed strength. The SPD produced a mirror image of the staunchly Atlanticist position Kohl took in 1982-7. This mirror image would inspire the SPD's *Nebenaußenpolitik* and the "Common Paper." Egon Bahr explained, "*Streitkultur* means that peace is most important,

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Oskar Lafontaine, "Die SPD muß ein umfassendes Sicherheits- und friedenspolitisches Konzept erarbeiten, *Sozialistische Tribüne*, 1983, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

that everything else is subsidiary, including the ideological differences between the SPD and SED."<sup>38</sup>

The conference converged around questions similar to the questions posed at the beginning of the seminar: "Had the SPD in the 1980s with their motto, 'peace is not everything, but without peace everything is nothing!' (*Frieden ist nicht alles, aber ohne Frieden ist alles nichts!*),<sup>39</sup> postulated that everything was subordinate to a security partnership, namely ideological contrasts, internal peace in the eastern blocs, human rights, the nation, and also freedom?"

Dowe explained that the conference "unfortunately left many questions open." For example, if the premise that through "common security" (see chapter three) change would occur in the East was fundamentally flawed, "what does this assessment signify then for the assessment of overall policies by most parties in West Germany? Had the new Social Democratic security mentality prepared and influenced the Soviet mentality for Gorbachev so that an essential foundation (*Grundstein*) for change could occur?...Did the SPD overrate their possibilities (*Möglichkeiten*) in the 1980s? Did the official FRG policies, in general, and especially the SPD have a realistic picture of the realities and the potential in the East? Did the SPD with "change through *rapprochement*" not only wander in the opposite direction, but also wander away unnoticed?"<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, in late September 1989, the then SPD parliamentary chief, Hans-Jochen Vogel, privately informed those interested in the formation of an eastern SPD that the western SPD opposed such a venture. Many SPD leaders, including Vogel, still viewed the SED as its sole partner in the GDR.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, even Helmut Schmidt stated publicly that the emerging upheaval in the GDR could "threaten the reform process of Eastern Europe" and should be avoided. An illustration of the Social Democrat's persistent concentration on contacts "from above" could be observed when, on 31 October 1989, the SPD instructed East Germans against rash behavior and announced they were intent on holding

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<sup>38</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>39</sup>Egon Bahr explained that this statement was formulated by Willy Brandt. Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 9.

<sup>41</sup>*Frankfurter Rundschau*, 23 May 1991.

talks with the SED in order to help the new General Secretary, Egon Krenz, peacefully resolve the social unrest in the GDR.<sup>42</sup>

Ash notes that as the demonstrations in East Germany grew, so did the Social Democrats' disarray. Of particular historical interest was the contrast between the two great veterans of *Ostpolitik*. As always following the intellectual logic of the chosen policy to an outspoken conclusion, Egon Bahr called for a stabilization of the GDR, with reforms leading to a third way.<sup>43</sup> What was needed was "a different GDR."<sup>44</sup> The people of the GDR, he said, would not let their state be taken from them. As late as 8 October, he made a cautious defense of Erich Honecker, pointing to everything that had been achieved in German-German relations in his time. Honecker had, said Bahr, allowed "homeopathic changes in his state," thus recalling an image from the Tutzing speech a quarter-century before. "There have been, if you like, reforms." And, just ten days before the East German leader was deposed, Bahr said "there's a principle that applies in every system: you don't change horses in the middle of the stream."<sup>45</sup> Willy Brandt also urged caution and restraint. Furthermore, in the spring of 1989, Brandt was scenting the possibility, not of a reunification but of a new unification (*Neuvereinigung*), although he said he would not live to experience it.<sup>46</sup> Following Gorbachev's visit to Bonn in June, he declared in the *Bundestag* that the time was approaching when "that which arbitrarily divides the people (*die Menschen*), not least the people of one people (*Volk*), will have to be dismantled."<sup>47</sup>

By mid-September Brandt wrote that while it was an open question "how and how far and in what form the people in both present states would come together," nonetheless "what then, after all, belongs together, cannot for ever be kept apart."<sup>48</sup> Then Brandt, returning from a visit with Gorbachev, discreetly let it be

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<sup>42</sup>*Die Zeit*, 22 September 1989; see also Gerhard Wuthe, "Einheit oder Nation - Traum oder Trauma der Sozialdemokratie?" *Deutschland Archiv*, November 1991, p. 1177.

<sup>43</sup>*Die Tageszeitung*, 30 September 1989.

<sup>44</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr in *Der Spiegel*, 42/1989.

<sup>45</sup>*Bergerdorfer Gesprächskreis* 88, 6-7 September 1989, p. 62; noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 329.

<sup>46</sup>Willy Brandt in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 May 1989.

<sup>47</sup>*Bundestag Plenarprotokolle*, 11/150, 16 June 1989, p. 11193; noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 330.

<sup>48</sup>*Bild*, 21 September 1989.

known that Honecker's days were numbered.<sup>49</sup> Brandt thus found the right words to respond to the opening of the Berlin Wall: "now what belongs together is growing together."<sup>50</sup>

It was late in 1989 when a few SPD politicians began to distance themselves from their previous outlook, suggesting that the changes in Moscow and the lack of any in East Germany had altered the framework for the Federal Republic's foreign policy.<sup>51</sup> "Change through distance" was to be the new guideline *vis-à-vis* a regime that was fast becoming a major hindrance to the thaw that Gorbachev had begun. The rigidity and orthodoxy of East Berlin's rulers was criticized by Norbert Gansel (MdB) and others; contacts with SED politicians should not lend any credence or legitimacy to those unwilling to reform, they demanded. This unrelenting policy by the SED can be observed in examining SED archive files. For example, on 17 April 1989, an "Information" clipping contends, in relation to "the SPD-SED delegation," "the Wall" and "human rights" will no longer "play a role in the discussions."<sup>52</sup> It became obvious that Social Democrats had clearly missed a historic opportunity to revise their policies when, only two months after Gansel's statement, the Wall came down.

### **A Negative Relationship**

Throughout the post-war years, the SPD has changed its stance significantly on perhaps the two most significant events to occur in post-war Germany: the reunification of Germany and European integration. The SPD's sentiment in respect of the two issues has had an indirect and negative impact on the other. As SPD emphasis grew in favor of European integration, it affected, in a negative manner, the emphasis given to German reunification.

The positive emphasis to which the SPD gave reunification during the Schumacher years influenced negatively its stance on integration. Schumacher saw re-establishing German unity and democratic values as his most important

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<sup>49</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 329.

<sup>50</sup>Willy Brandt, *Reden zu Deutschland*, 1990, p. 37.

<sup>51</sup>Norbert Gansel, "Wenn alle gehen wollen, weil die Falschen bleiben ...," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 13 September, 1989.

<sup>52</sup>*Zentrales Parteiarhiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/81.



post-war task.<sup>53</sup> In 1952, Ollenhauer, who had taken over the role left by Schumacher's absence, moderated the SPD's position, keeping the party in step with growing public opinion.<sup>54</sup> Paterson states that "with the entry of the SPD into the Monnet Action in October 1955 ... [t]here was no doubt ... that priorities had been reversed. German reunification was relegated from the major to a relatively minor theme in the SPD's European policy."<sup>55</sup> However, within the party, some speakers like Carlo Schmid continued to maintain that efforts towards reunification must precede efforts for Western European integration.<sup>56</sup>

In the early 1960s, the SPD was quite critical of the Gaullist notion of Europe which rejected Britain and was hostile towards the United States. The SPD stated that this idea of Europe lacked supra-nationality and democratic control.<sup>57</sup> As mentioned, the SPD called for a "Europe of the Peoples," pushed for the fusion of the EEC, Euratom, and the ECSC<sup>58</sup> and the increased rights of the European Parliament. Notwithstanding this, a prominent member of the SPD, Kurt Mattick, argued that treaties relating to Europe should contain mention of German reunification: a notion which was to become less important in a few short years.<sup>59</sup>

By the 1970s, the party gave strong support for a "European Union." Its stance on foreign policy had been influenced greatly by the *Ostpolitik* of Brandt. Led by Egon Bahr, the most dramatic course of action in relation to Europe and reunification occurred in the mid-1960s and was accepted as policy by the SPD in the 1970s and beyond. Bahr called for an end to the policy confrontation of "all or nothing" with respect to the German question. Rather than working to overthrow the GDR, Bahr suggested that attempts be made to change it. Change, he believed, would only be possible through a policy of *rapprochement*. The policy implied a de-emphasizing of the single-minded pursuit of Western unification and an emphasis on solutions that would include the whole of Europe.

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<sup>53</sup> Lewis Edinger, *Kurt Schumacher*, 1965, p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, *Verhandlungen*, 7 February 1952, p. 1, section 1C.

<sup>55</sup> William E. Paterson, *The SPD and European Integration - A Study of Opposition in Foreign Affairs*, 1973, p. 125.

<sup>56</sup> Carlo Schmid in SPD Parliamentary Party "Mitteilungen für die Presse" 17 November 1955.

<sup>57</sup> "SPD gegen Übertragung des Gaullismus auf Europe," *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 16 August 1960.

<sup>58</sup> "7-Punkte Programm Willy Brandts", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 11 July 1964.

<sup>59</sup> *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 7 March 1963. *Deutsche Zeitung*, 11 and 18 March 1963.

Brandt felt that in order to achieve this policy, a "European Peace Order" would be necessary.<sup>60</sup> European peace to the SPD leadership implied and, in the later years of SPD policy had the effect of, playing down the reunification option and emphasizing the permanence of the Federal Republic.<sup>61</sup> In the context of Europe, this policy did not mean that the SPD concentrated more of its efforts on Western Europe. The reverse was the case: the SPD began to concentrate much more on inter-German affairs and push for European unity.

This push for unity in the 1970s and much of the 1980s came in the form of support for increased European Parliamentary powers and expansion of the Community to include Greece, Spain, Portugal. Moreover, Brandt's suggestion, as mentioned earlier, that economically stronger nations of the EC might integrate more quickly than others exemplified the dramatic turnaround of SPD policy over the years.

Furthermore, this thinking developed during the SPD's "second phase of *Ostpolitik*" in the 1980s, with expanded communications and negotiations with the East German ruling party (see chapter four). The SPD called for the CDU/CSU to modify its stance on demanding the collapse of East Germany and to work with the East Germans for the notion of pragmatic acceptance of a divided Germany. This agenda worked to SPD loss of support by the German people in the contributed to the "bombshell" of German reunification and the elections of 1990.

The SPD's complete transformation in relation to reunification and European integration is indeed interesting to examine. The events of 1989 and 1990 characterized the severe disorientation of the party in defining its objectives for future policies in Europe and a Reunited Germany. Unlike German Conservatives, Social Democrats hardly ever used nationalist rhetoric. When referring to the

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<sup>60</sup>Willy Brandt "Für ein geregeltes Nebeneinander," 2 July 1967, in Brandt, *Aussenpolitik Deutschlandpolitik Europapolitik*, Berlin Verlag, 1968, p. 85.

<sup>61</sup>Notably, the European Peace Order involved exchanging renunciation-of-force agreements with the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia and to include the GDR fully in the process. Yet, Brandt stipulated that his administration would not view East Germany as a foreign country (*nicht Ausland*). (For legal aspect of this, see chapter one). Nevertheless, the fact that he failed to mention "reunification" in his speech and quite openly acknowledged the existence of two German states demonstrated the belief that he was ready to put the immediate benefits of co-operation with the GDR ahead of any aspiration of a reunited Germany. See Boris Meissner, *Deutsche Ostpolitik 1961-1970*, Cologne, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1970, pp. 380-383.

German question Social Democrats made it quite clear that unification would only be thinkable after European unification.<sup>62</sup> For them the division of Germany after 1945 was part and parcel of the continental divide. The national goal would only be attained if and when the two blocs dissolved.<sup>63</sup> Before 1989 this assessment was generally based on a power-political analysis centered on the Soviet Union's interest in retaining its sphere of influence. Apart from the reformist-realist view, another line of thought converged on the very same conclusion, leading to a similar policy. The German left would not condone any attempt to qualify German crimes between 1933 and 1945. Conservative and right-wing publications comparing the concentration camps with genocidal policies elsewhere - particularly in Stalin's Russia - were refuted on the grounds that the Nazis had created a hideous example of mass murder unique in the whole of human history. It was seen as Germany's responsibility to reject the legacy of militarism and national *Realpolitik*. If there was never another single German state, then that was believed to be history's just punishment.

Ever since the 1960s, "reunification" had become a term only German Conservatives would use while the left, including the Social Democrats, did not consider the re-establishment of Germany within its borders of 1937. Their aim was "new-unification" (*Neuvereinigung*) or simply unification.<sup>64</sup> While there was an intra-party consensus on rejecting re-unification its hidden ambivalence became an important stumbling block for the SPD in 1990. Representatives of the Social Democratic left argued that a mutually accepted European Peace Order would only be thinkable "on the basis of two, permanently existing, German states."<sup>65</sup> Their interpretation of a European solution was to demand the unconditional surrender of any national goals as a prerequisite for further *détente*.

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<sup>62</sup>Walter Momper, "Grußwort des Regierenden Bürgermeisters von Berlin beim Programm-Parteitag," *Presseservice der SPD*, Berlin, 18 December 1989, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup>Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, "Eine Warnung vor Entkoppelung: Zur notwendigen Verknüpfung von deutscher und europäischer Einigung," *Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst*, 13 February 1990.

<sup>64</sup>SPD, "Von der Konfrontation der Blöcke zu einem Europäischen Sicherheitssystem. Positionspapier zu den sicherheitspolitischen Aspekten der Einigung Deutschlands im Rahmen der Europäischen Integration," *Presseservice der SPD*, Bonn, 25 April 1990, p.1; see also Norbert Gansel, "Wenn alle gehen wollen, weil die Falschen bleiben ...," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 13 September 1989.

<sup>65</sup>Konrad Gilges, "Was ist neu an der Sicherheitspolitik der SPD?," *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, September 1986, p. 937.

## Internal SPD Unrest

Even Social Democrats directly involved with the "Common Paper" of 1987 began to rethink their relationship with the SED leadership; however, it was a difficult conclusion to make. Moreover, any reservations by members of the Basic Values Commission was restrained by Erhard Eppler. For example, during an interview with Thomas Meyer, (along with Eppler, the most significant author of the "Common Paper"), a paper was given to the author dated 29 March 1989. This paper with the working title of "Report of the Basic Values Commission at the *Vorstand* of the SPD," had a hand written title of "Protest of the Basic Values Commission."<sup>66</sup> Although Meyer described the significance of the "Protest Paper," he also acknowledged that it was never published because of Eppler's insistence that the "procedure" of the contacts with the SED was necessary "for influence later."<sup>67</sup> Yet, for the purposes of this chapter, the intra-SPD disharmony, even amongst members of the Basic Values Commission<sup>68</sup> is indeed interesting to examine. The "Protest Paper" spoke of many different issues; the points relating to the "Common Paper" were expressed as follows:

In August 1987, the Academy of Social Sciences at the Central Committee of the SED and the Basic Values Commission at the *Parteivorstand* of the SPD, together published the discussion paper called the *Streitkultur* paper. In it, they mutually put down the basic guidelines or foundations of a *Streitkultur*. ... Today, quite a while after the mutual declaration of these basic guidelines, we see ourselves provoked to engage in that very dispute about the norms which have agreed upon.

... the participation of all individuals and institutions in the societal dialogue about which the paper talks - must be put to work and responsibility borne by those who, in their own system, have responsibility for it. But the respective other side may and must be reminded (*anmahen*) of this.

The "Common Paper" was, without any reservations, publicly disseminated by the SPD *Vorstand* and the SPD *Parteirat*. Parts of the press have also printed it verbatim. We did not succeed,

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<sup>66</sup>Interview with Thomas Meyer, 9 February 1995.

<sup>67</sup>Meyer expressed that his main point in 1987 was that a dispute culture was an indispensable part of any contacts; thus, he "lost all respect" with the SED towards the middle of 1989. Eppler disagreed with him. Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>This paper was indeed an important discovery, since it was well known within the party that the Basic Values Commission was considered the most "liberal" component of the SPD; interview with Hanno Drechsler, former Lord Mayor of Marburg, 12 February 1995.



however, in launching a broad public debate with all those positions that we pursued. This may, in part be caused by the fact that great parts of the Federal Republic did not immediately feel personally concerned with the purposes (*Anliegen*) that were intended by the paper.

Certain events in the GDR which were obviously counter to the goals of the paper have fueled arguments to the critics and skeptics. The SPD supports the continuation of the dialogue on the basis of which the paper has come into existence.

Today, if we draw a result of the practice for which our partner in the project of a mutual dispute culture has to be responsible, we perceive ... developments, but also those which disappoint us.

On one hand, we perceive an attempt (*Bemühen*) [circled and underlined twice in the text] to keep the agreements regarding the reduction of enemy images. In scholarly literature, in the media and in the official releases from ... the SED, we ourselves and other ... political enemies in western democracies are often noted and treated without hostilities as opponents or partners who's right for existence is not called into question and with whom, all criticism [and] cooperation is desired and searched for.

Juxtaposed to this however are the limitations of the societal dialogue within the GDR and the worsening (*Verschlechterung*) [underlined twice in text] which we have to note already only a few months after the publication of the Common Project with amazement (*Unverständnis*) and outrage (*Empörung*). ... [we also] see massive and consequence-laden attempts to punish individuals and groups which outside of the state party want to participate in the public dialogue about questions which immediately concern them as citizens of their own country and to hinder their participation in the inner societal dialogue.<sup>69</sup>

In our Common Paper we have named as preconditions for the societal dialogue the "growing importance of the informedness of the citizens in East and West." This was hardly heeded in the GDR. Currently in the GDR it is not even possible anymore to get the text of the Common Paper, although we were assured that a reprint would happen.

Even though the Common Paper makes it clear that reform inside of each system has to come on the basis of the respective system, and even if there are differences or counter-positions in the interpretation of human rights and democracy, that which has been noted [in] the paper about the intra-societal conditions and the inter-societal dialogue are neither vague nor ambiguous.

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<sup>69</sup>NB: This paragraph was by far the most heavily annotated.

After the reunification of Germany, Conservatives, like Minister for Defense Volker Rühe, and former East German dissidents, alleged that Social Democrats had been too close to Honecker and his regime.<sup>70</sup> For the SPD, the former claimed, *détente* had become a symbol for renouncing German unity, while the latter maintained that Bahr and others had betrayed the independent movements in the GDR which had fought for human rights. Neither accepted that *Ostpolitik* had been the only realistic course of action for Bonn.

As was the case in the five year review of the "Common Paper" in 1992, the attempt to explain the lack of support towards the opposition groups within the GDR was the most difficult task for the SPD. Moreover, in the case of the FES conference, many of the leaders of the opposition groups in the former GDR were now active members of the SPD, mostly representing Eastern *Länder* on behalf of the party. The most outspoken figures representing this group were Stephan Hilsberg and Markus Meckel, each having critical views regarding the SPD's policies and the "Common Paper." Meckel asserted that "it was correct to develop this paper, however, the effects were extremely to short." He calculated that the paper was only successful "from August until November 1987," thus up to the point when, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the GDR raided the environmental library and arrested protesters at the Rosa Luxemburg demonstrations in January 1988.<sup>71</sup> He stated that there was "no distinct and sharp reaction" from the party, which he had expected. Yet, he argued that "one should not underestimate the effects within the SED" that the paper contributed to. But, he added, "nevertheless, the paper's effectiveness failed, because the SED had not changed itself."<sup>72</sup>

Stephan Hilsberg was the most critical of any of the former dissidents on the effectiveness of the "Common Paper."<sup>73</sup> He claimed that Egon Bahr was mistaken when he asserted that the opposition groups in the GDR believed in the paper and

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<sup>70</sup>See Bärbel Bohley in Helga Hirsch, "Der falsche Weg: Politik von oben. Die westliche 'Realpolitik' hat den Umbruch im Osten verzögert," *Die Zeit*, 21 February 1992.

<sup>71</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 165.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

had held on to it for inspiration.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, he states "the inspiration from Solidarity did more for the opposition movement and was more crucial than the [SPD's] 'second phase' of *détente* policy."<sup>75</sup> Dieter Dowe explained that the most heated debate of the FES conference came when Hilsberg accused Bahr of neglecting the struggling dissident movement. According to Dowe, Hilsberg insisted "you conducted politics only on the state level; you never realized that people lived there."<sup>76</sup> Egon Bahr in return stated that he worked for the people "for over thirty years."<sup>77</sup> Dowe explained that it was quite obvious that this rather personal remake by Hilsberg "saddened Bahr." He went on by saying that by the end of the conference, Bahr and others admitted "we wanted to change the conditions [in the GDR] the paper had this potential,...but we made errors by neglecting the opposition."<sup>78</sup> Bahr also stated, that he recalled asking the dissidents to be patient. But, he added, "I don't know, if I lived in Eastern Europe and would have had to be patient, if I could have survived" (*Ich weiß nicht, ob ich geduldig wäre, wenn ich in Osteuropa leben würde*).<sup>79</sup>

Gert Weisskirchen (SPD MdB) made the point that the party was correct to deal with SED leaders, but it did not see the "moral force" within the opposition movement and the SPD should have made, at least, a symbolic gesture."<sup>80</sup> However, as mentioned in the fourth chapter, it was Bahr's view that ""by our not having publicly demanded freedom of movement for the opposition, that became attainable."<sup>81</sup>

Despite the fact that many questions were left unanswered, the result of the conference, as agreed by the SPD members, was that "we should learn from the

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<sup>74</sup>This was in response to the author's question after having met with Egon Bahr the day before. Interview with Stephan Hilsberg, Potsdam, 18 February 1995.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid. He also made the same point in *Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, pp. 168-169.

<sup>76</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. Bahr also stated this point in relation to "working for reunification." Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>78</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

<sup>79</sup>*Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 33.

<sup>80</sup>Recounted by Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

<sup>81</sup>SPD Press Service of a lecture in Dresden on 16 February 1992, 85-92, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 332.

policies of the 1980s, not only to deal with purely state politics anymore."<sup>82</sup> Dowe explained that the SPD members meant this in relation to all conflicts including the situations in Bosnia and Moscow.

The main condemnation of the SPD's "national policy" in the 1980s rests on moral grounds.<sup>83</sup> Given the ultimate outcome of the East German collapse, one might wonder whether the SPD's leaders could not have done more to keep the cause of reunification at the forefront of its thinking. Critics argue that the East German system was fatally flawed because of its "totalitarian" foundations and argue that West German policy-makers in general should have more deliberately sought to cultivate a formal *Konzept* of national reunion, much as they were legally obliged to do by the Basic Law. Even individuals like Egon Bahr had such objectives in mind in the early 1960s when they first articulated the ideas of "change through *rapprochement*."

Admittedly, those seeking to lay blame for the SPD's lack of preparedness for reunification can appeal to the fact that there were notable variations in the handling of *Ostpolitik* across the West German political spectrum. Even as they called for a more practical policy in dealing with the GDR ("*eine Politik des Machbaren*"), for example, leading conservative politicians like Helmut Kohl generally took care to underscore the "openness" of the national question and the German people's right to determine its fate in "free self-determination." In contrast, the leadership of the SPD were indeed far more willing to play down the Federal Republic's national obligations in the interest of productive relations with East Berlin; some outspoken Social Democrats even went as far as to recommend rewriting the Federal Republic Basic Law to take account of (what they perceived to be) the lasting character of inter-German division.

Stephen Szabo noted that the renewed national feeling which had begun on the left in the early 1980s and was fed by the SPD's emphasis on the German interest, had migrated to the right by 1990 and was being effectively used by Chancellor Kohl

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<sup>82</sup>Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

<sup>83</sup>Above all, this position is subscribed to by legal theorists, who contend that the illegitimacy of the GDR's "totalitarian system" was a crucial key to anticipating its eventual fall. For a revealing example of this deduction, see Hacker, *Deutsche Irrtümer*, pp. 437-431; see also Georg Ress, *Die Rechtslage Deutschlands nach dem Grundlagenvertrag vom 21. Dezember 1972*, 1978, pp. 390-405 *passim*.



and the CDU as well as by the *Republikaner*. Furthermore, he maintained that by 1990, the SPD seemed to have forgotten Egon Bahr's own dictum, "Don't trust any German who tells you that the national question is dead." Oskar Lafontaine and others continued to stress opposition to reunification reflecting both a concern for the security consequences of unification but also a tactical desire to play on working class resentments against the new immigrants and to stem a loss of voters to the *Republikaner*.<sup>84</sup> It is ironic that the Social Democrats promoted unification in the 1950s in part because of their desire to avoid the militarization of Germany, but promoted national reassociation but not reunification in the 1980s in order to foster the same goals. Szabo asserted that the "party stood at the beginning of the 1990s again in the position Schumacher wished earlier to avoid of being the non-national party, and by ceding the national issue to the Christian Democrats."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Stephen F. Szabo, *The Changing Politics of German Security*, 1990, p. 91.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

## Conclusion: Hindsight

The history of the Social Democratic contribution to the dissolution of the Eastern bloc has not yet been written. It was a social-democratization [what happened there], which we brought into it, and only we could do this - the Conservatives could not. ... When Brandt met for the first time with Gorbachev, we had just completed the draft of [the SPD's] new Basic Program. Gorbachev glanced over the headlines and said, "These are my themes!"<sup>1</sup>

From the lofty vantage point of the 1995, it may be tempting for some in Germany to act as though they behaved somewhat differently prior to 1989. James McAdams reminds us that contemporary German politicians have nothing to gain, and a great deal to lose, by admitting that they were unprepared for the events of 1989. In particular, given their most pressing political objective, getting reelected, they have every reason to interpret the recent past in a manner that will cast their own behavior in a favorable light while simultaneously casting doubt upon the commitments and performance of their opponents.<sup>2</sup> It was not for nothing, he reminds us, that Helmut Kohl informed the *Bundestag* in the budgetary debates of September 1993, that he and a few colleagues had consistently "defended the old-fashioned view of the unity of the German nation." Emphasizing that the SPD while in opposition had given up on the idea, Kohl added, "my friends and I believed in German unity, and now it is here (*sie ist da*)."<sup>3</sup>

In their own way, scholars are subject to similar pressures. There are no academic accolades for those who failed to predict that the inter-German relationship would become *intra*-German by 1990.<sup>4</sup> Conversely, there seems to be a world of academic and political distinction to be gained by turning the polemical attacks against the GDR of a decade ago into supposedly successful prophecies and criticism of the SPD and its relationship with the SED.<sup>5</sup> It can be argued that in

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<sup>1</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>2</sup>A. James McAdams, "Inter-German Relations in Historical Perspective: The Risks of Biased Hindsight," *German Politics*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 1994, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Speech on September 8, 1992, *Bulletin*, no. 73, Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt, September 10, 1993, p. 766; noted in op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Jens Hacker, *Deutsche Irrtümer*, 1992.

<sup>5</sup>Along with Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993; for critique of the SPD's 1980s policies in the 1990s see "Die Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart: Interview mit Konrad Weiß," *Deutschland Archiv*, April 1992, pp. 441-445; Ralf Altenhof, "Versagen nicht nur im Osten: Die

applying such historical reasoning in hindsight, scholars and politicians fall prey to the temptation of reading the present into the past, thus the inter-German contacts of 1949-1989 would be depicted less for what they really were, and more for what they might have been had one only known how the story of Germany's division was to turn out.

The SPD argues that so much of what happened to the GDR was the result of specific choices that were hard enough by themselves to foresee, i.e., Gorbachev's decision to accelerate, rather than back away from, his reform program; and the East German *Politbüro's* decision to continue supporting Honecker, despite growing signs of discontent throughout the party apparatus with his style of government. Yet even more revealing, given the extent to which the occurrence of one development was linked to another, is the fact that it would have been nearly impossible to anticipate the chain of events that finally resulted in the GDR's collapse. For example, McAdams notes that the citizens of Leipzig would arguably never have assembled in such numbers for the Monday Demonstrations of October 1989 had they not had some indication that the National People's Army (NVA) had lost the will to turn its weapons against them. For similar reasons, the leaders of the NVA might have acted quite differently had their Soviet military counterparts in the GDR not already shown a disinclination to defend the "achievements of socialism" by force of arms.<sup>6</sup>

Bearing this in mind, it could be argued, however, that certain warning signs of the GDR's impending collapse were already present for all to see by the mid- to

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Haltung des Westens gegenüber der DDR," *Deutschland Archiv*, June 1992, pp. 633-636; Carola Becker, "Klänglich versagt," *Die Zeit*, May 24, 1991; Helga Hirsch, "Der falsche Weg: Politik von oben," *Die Zeit*, February 28, 1992, p. 3; Robert Leicht, "Trübungen auf der Netzhaut," *Die Zeit*, March 27, 1992, p. 5; Gesine Schwan, "Vom schwierigen Handeln in der Grauzone," *Die Zeit*, May 1, 1992, p. 3; Gert Weisskirchen, "Ambivalenzen der Entspannungspolitik," *Deutschland Archiv*, May 1992, pp. 526-530; Gert Weisskirchen, "Es gibt eine Befangenheit," *Die Tageszeitung*, February 27, 1992; Gerhard Wettig, "'Wandel durch Annäherung' im geschichtlichen Rückblick," *Deutschland Archiv*, September 1991, pp. 950-953; and Gerhard Wuthe, "Einheit der Nation: Traum oder Trauma der Sozialdemokratie?" *Deutschland Archiv*, November 1991, pp. 1170-1179.

<sup>6</sup>For similar arguments, see *Der Spiegel*, 24 August, 1992; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Info*, April-June, 1992, p. 11.; SPD Vorstand, *Die deutsche Teilung und ihre Überwindung: Sozialdemokratische Positionen zur Deutschlandpolitik 1945 bis heute*, 1991; and Jürgen Schmude, "Wir würden es wieder tun," *Der Spiegel*, 3 February, 1992, pp. 46-47.

late 1980s.<sup>7</sup> From today's vantage point, the tell-tale signs of crisis appear to have been manifest throughout the decade. For example, it was evident by the mid-1980s that the GDR's economic managers were desperately struggling to maintain the well-being of a bankrupt economy and finding fewer and fewer resources of their own to accomplish the task: take for example, the two nearly DM 1 billion bank credits that East Berlin sought from the FRG in 1983 and 1984 simply to pay the interest on its mounting international debt.

With the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to the Soviet leadership in 1985, serious strains were also in evidence within the Warsaw Pact. These strains divided those states, and became more acute when the leadership in the USSR urgently called for fundamental reform.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the GDR was willing to risk practically any confrontation to prevent such reform taking place. This was evident from the antagonistic relations that had already developed between Gorbachev and Erich Honecker by the Eleventh SED Congress in April 1986 and which continued until the latter's forced removal from office (see chapter five). Finally, throughout East Germany, one could also find evidence, albeit in the slightest form, of a rising opposition culture that would eventually help to topple the Communist regime: for example, the increased assertiveness at the grass-roots level of the country's Lutheran churches and the founding of the first organized dissident groups, such as *Initiative Frieden und Menschenrechte*.

### **The CDU and *Ostpolitik***

Yet, it is important to consider the fact that, along with the SPD, the Union parties played a role in promoting closer ties with the SED leadership in the 1980s. After years of attacking the Brandt's Social Democratic policy of "small steps" toward the East in the bitter debates of the early 1970s, the leadership of the CDU/CSU had made an about-face and became unabashedly supportive of his policy.<sup>9</sup> McAdams noted that in only a few years after coming to power in 1982, the governing coalition negotiated a number of significant political and economic

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<sup>7</sup>"Die Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart: Interview mit Konrad Weiß," *Deutschland Archiv*, April 1992, pp. 441-445.

<sup>8</sup>A. James McAdams, "Inter-German Relations in Historical Perspective: The Risks of Biased Hindsight," *German Politics*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 1994, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup>See Clay Clemens, *Reluctant Realists: The Christian Democrats and West German Ostpolitik*, 1989.



agreements with East Berlin, which arguably went a long way to improve the international standing of the GDR.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as early as March 1985, Honecker and Kohl had met at the funeral of Chernenko in Moscow, and had pledged to work together to ensure that no war would ever emanate from German soil again.<sup>11</sup>

Many "what ifs" are raised by a critical analysis of *Ostpolitik*, not only with regard to the SPD, but with regard to the continuation of the policy by the CDU/CSU after 1982. What if, instead of welcoming Honecker for a formal visit to Bonn in 1987, Helmut Kohl had intensified his attacks upon the SED's dictatorial practices? And, what if his party and the Social Democratic opposition sought instead to cultivate deeper ties with East Germany's dissidents, rather than concentrating upon improving their relations with the SED élite? These more focused criticisms of the management of *Ostpolitik* do seem to have some credence. In more than one way, by the 1980s, the majority of West German politicians had grown accustomed to acknowledging the *de facto*, if not *de jure*, existence of the GDR as an independent state. As they acted upon this principle, they may very well have helped to reinforce the impression, within East Germany and abroad, that the Communist regime was there to stay as an accepted element of European politics. Timothy Garton Ash states that there were "symptoms of cognitive dissonance in relation to the GDR in the mid-1980s, overrating, or at least overstating, its economic strength and its contribution to 'peace' and *Humanität*. In a sense Honecker was not merely the victim of his own illusions. He was also a victim of Bonn politicians' illusions."<sup>12</sup>

Historical reasoning may be used in hindsight to support the views that because the GDR fell as quickly and as peacefully as it did in late 1989, its collapse might have been hastened had the SPD in the late 1960s and 1970s, and the CDU thereafter more aggressively applied pressure on East Berlin. Yet as mentioned earlier, the culminating and conclusive factor that accounted for the GDR's demise lay outside of the FRG's control, that is, the Soviet Union's decision to withdraw its armed support from the East German regime. After all, even Kurt Schumacher

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<sup>10</sup>A. James McAdams, "Inter-German Relations in Historical Perspective: The Risks of Biased Hindsight," *German Politics*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 1994, p. 197.

<sup>11</sup>*Deutschland Archiv*, no. 18, April 1985, p. 446.

<sup>12</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 205.

and Konrad Adenauer recognized that the key to the GDR's existence lay in Moscow, not in East Berlin (see chapter one).

### **Influence of the SPD**

As demonstrated within the earlier chapters, it can be argued that the Social Democrats were able to influence foreign policy formation in Germany while in opposition. Egon Bahr stated, "it is no virtue in politics to be ahead of the times."<sup>13</sup> In many respects the SPD in opposition shaped the security agenda more than the CDU in government. It responded more quickly to the new strategic culture which emerged from the 1980s, especially to the new anti-nuclearism, the desire for more national autonomy and sovereignty and to the changing East-West climate. Furthermore, it can be argued that its views on defensive defense and security partnership were picked up increasingly by the government at the end of the decade and even by Mikhail Gorbachev in his concept of reasonable sufficiency.<sup>14</sup>

As mentioned in the introduction, political parties in Germany more than elsewhere have historically been able to influence foreign policy formulation in Germany. Specifically, the SPD's policies in the 1980s attempted to influence foreign policy formulation in two ways, i.e., by putting pressure on the government and by influencing thought and discussion in Germany.<sup>15</sup> The SPD had been successful in influencing both the Federal government, as well as the internal political thought within the Federal Republic, during the 1980s. Although it is difficult to determine the exact amount of influence the party had, this thesis has shown that the SPD was effective in bringing pressure on the Federal government in the field of security affairs. As mentioned in chapter four, Karsten Voigt claimed that the SPD-SED proposals brought increased domestic pressures on the Kohl government<sup>16</sup> and may have played a role in bringing about the informal understanding between President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl a year

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<sup>13</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Burkard Koch, Berlin, 20 February, 1995.

<sup>15</sup>William E. Paterson, "Political Parties and the Making of Foreign Policy - The Case of the Federal Republic," *Review of International Studies*, no. 7, 1981, p. 231.

<sup>16</sup>As mentioned in chapter four, Voigt stated that the U.S was even considering modernizing their chemical weapons. He stated "they reached a point [in 1986] to either get rid of them or modernize...the SPD stopped them!" Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.

later in May 1986 when they concluded that the aging stock of American chemical weapons stored in Germany would be removed by 1992.<sup>17</sup> As intended by the Social Democrats, the first two of the SPD-SED proposals had drawn attention to the relative absence of substance in official contacts and had brought pressure to bear on the West German government to do more.<sup>18</sup> As Bahr had stated in 1985, "agreements between the present nuclear powers to exercise self-restraint could have a positive influence on the non-nuclear states, and would be the most effective means of reducing the risk that new powers will enter the arena."<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Bahr, along with many within his own party, expanded on his security policy and attempted to put "common security" into practice through contacts and proposals with the SED. Thus, security issues were at the heart of the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*.

The SPD did not, however, only concentrate on influencing foreign policy in Germany; in fact, the "Common Dialogue" was an attempt to influence foreign governments as well by (i) pressuring the United States and the Soviet Union to come to agreements on chemical and nuclear weapons and (ii) by signing inter-German (inter-party) agreements which attempted to bring pressure on the East German government to allow for more internal reform. Here the SPD's influence is less obvious. Bahr's concept of "common security," influential through the Palme Commission (see chapter three), and employed in the "Common Paper" of 1987 (see chapter four), attempted to bring about a "new thinking" between the East and the West in an attempt to secure peace. The primary purpose of the "Common Paper" of 1987 was to influence conditions within the GDR by calling for democratic reform. The SPD asserts today that its undertaking in the 1980s was vital to the internal shift in mentality within the SED and asserts further that the gigantic security apparatus, on which the SED was supported, was not used against dissidents in 1989 precisely because of SPD involvement. As mentioned in chapter five, Manfred Uschner argued that the SPD pursued relations with the

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<sup>17</sup>For this argument see Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, pp. 169-170.

<sup>18</sup>For this argument see Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, pp. 169-170.

<sup>19</sup>Egon Bahr, "Paper 2: Observations on the Principle of common security," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Policies for Common Security*, 1985, p. 32-33.

GDR "with concern and hope that it would penetrate the GDR leadership so that a timely course for the opening and democratization could proceed."<sup>20</sup> The argument that the "Common Paper" contributed to the opposition movement within the East is indeed the most impassioned assertion by the SPD.<sup>21</sup> Timothy Garton Ash noted that a September 1987 report by the *Stasi*'s central evaluation group on popular reactions to the paper dwelled at length on the extent to which Party members and "progressive citizens" were unsettled and confused by what the "Common Paper" said. As was its job, the *Stasi* emphasized the critical rather than the supportive voices<sup>22</sup> and reportedly said that it would now be more difficult to maintain the "defense-readiness" of the younger generation. The GDR was worried that "the discussion on the competition of the systems, the comparison of their successes and failures, would set the GDR difficult tasks, in light of the difficult economic situation and in particular of difficulties with consumer supplies."<sup>23</sup> The fact that the SED was concerned with many of the principles listed in the "Common Paper" points to the potential influence, especially on dissidents looking towards the West for support, that this paper might have had in forming a new climate of opinion within East Germany; however, when the SED moved to counter the Soviet influence inside the GDR (see chapter five), the regime had, in effect, counteracted any influence that the "Common Paper" could have had as well. Furthermore, as Egon Bahr explained, the SPD could not cooperate directly with the dissidents within the GDR because "the *Stasi* was too powerful."<sup>24</sup> It is this author's contention that if the "Common Paper" had any significant influence within the GDR, it must have been prior to the spring of 1989, i.e., prior to the GDR raid on the environmental library and the arrest of protesters at the Rosa Luxemburg demonstrations in January 1988.<sup>25</sup> It is

<sup>20</sup>Manfred Uschner, *Die Ostpolitik der SPD: Sieg und Niederlage einer Strategie*, 1991, p. 148.

<sup>21</sup>For a review of this assertion see "Sozialdemokraten verteidigen Dialog mit der SED," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 26 August 1992.

<sup>22</sup>Along the same line Mielke, head of the *Stasi*, was concerned with the negative reaction within the FRG and the "right-wing" members of the SPD. See his comments in an "Information" article in *Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED*: IV 2/2.035/79.

<sup>23</sup>*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*: Z4230, 24 September 1987, noted in Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 326.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>25</sup>This point was argued by Markus Meckel (SPD former dissident) in *Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 165. Even though the SPD argued that after the arrests surrounding the demonstrations of the Luxemburg-Liebkecht Demonstrations, the ecologist Wismar wrote to both the SPD and the *Politbüro* of the SED and demanded "compliance with the spirit of the document" (Common Paper) the East German



therefore difficult to argue that the "Common Paper" and its principles had broken the dogmatic confidence of the state-party by the fall of 1989 as the SPD has argued.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, it is doubtful that the "Common Paper" directly influenced the SED's decision to not use a military option in responding to the upheavals in the latter part of 1989.

### SPD and its "Second Phase"

The first phase of *Ostpolitik* was a series of diplomatic initiatives whose foundation was a specific military-political balance. In effect, it brought diplomacy and political relations into agreement with the *status quo*. As has been argued above, the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* was qualitatively different. It proposed to alter the military-strategic *status quo* in order to facilitate political-diplomatic initiatives. However, the leaders of the SPD and even some members of the governing Free Democratic Party took the process one step further, concentrating on security issues and championing a "second phase" of the *Ostpolitik* as a way of deepening relations with the GDR. In this process, there were indeed practitioners of *Ostpolitik* who undoubtedly took their *rapprochement* with the GDR further than was absolutely necessary. For example, some prominent SPD parliamentarians called for the recognition within West Germany of a separate East German citizenship and for an end to any further discussion about the openness of the national question (see chapter two).<sup>27</sup> On the same lines, in a "personal" and "secret note" within the SED archive files recording a

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government was not willing to adhere to the paper's principles. Thus this demonstrates the lack of real influence on the SED. See "Dokumentation : Das SPD-SED-Papier in der Rückschau," *Deutschland Archiv*, 10-1992, p. 1105.

<sup>26</sup>Meckel stated that there was "no distinct and sharp reaction" from the party, which he had expected. Yet, he argued that "one should not underestimate the effects within the SED" that the paper contributed to. But, he added, "nevertheless, the paper's effectiveness failed, because the SED had not changed itself." See *Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 165.

<sup>27</sup>See, for example, the essay by former FRG representative to the GDR Klaus Bölling, "Die offene deutsche Frage," in *Der Spiegel*, April 18, 1985, pp. 52-53. Also see the various stands taken by Bundestag deputy, Jürgen Schmude, at the time, including "Deutsch-deutsches Verhältnis," *Informationen der sozialdemokratischen Bundestagsfraktion*, May 17, 1985. While both figures later came under fire once the reality of German reunification had become apparent to all, one should recognize that both Bölling and Schmude were acting out of, what they perceived to be, the best interests of the eastern German people. On the more general Social Democratic innovations in the Eastern policy, see Wilfried von Bredow and Rudolf Brocke, *Das deutschlandpolitische Konzept der SPD*, 1987.

meeting between Honecker and Bahr, Bahr is quoted as stating, under the "order of W. Brandt," "[w]e want to profess in every form, that with a official takeover of the government of the FRG by the SPD, [we] will respect fully the citizenship (*Staatsbürgerschaft*) of the GDR, so that this topic is buried."<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the SPD's "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* became more and more reliant on its contacts with the Soviet Union and the GDR. Thus, in a sense, its entire existence relied on preserving the *status quo*. Although it attempted to improve the *status quo*, it nevertheless saw change only in this context. As Stephen Silvia stated:

In the 1980s a negative dialectic increasingly came to dominate the western SPD's *Ostpolitik*. This is not to say that the Social Democrats' policy of openness toward the East was inherently or initially flawed. On the contrary, the first phase of the SPD's *Ostpolitik*, which unfolded over the course of the late 1960s and early 1970s, was an innovative, ambitious, and admirable program that enabled West Germany to heal many of the wounds still open from World War II, to ease political tensions within Europe, and to help create a modicum of tolerance within the eastern European regimes that made the revolutions of 1989 possible. Yet by the 1980s the SPD's *Ostpolitik* had increasingly mutated until it became an at times perverse dogma that stressed maintaining stable ties with the existing leaders in Communist regimes at all costs. This negative dialectic helps to explain why the western German left responded with disbelief, denial, and depression rather than jubilation when the ultimate goal of the *Ostpolitik* itself was actually achieved in 1989 and 1990, namely, the end of Stalinist-Leninist rule in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, many argue that these excesses are hardly sufficient to indict the entire tenets of *Ostpolitik*. McAdams stated, for those who wish to suggest that a less accommodating policy could have been devised for dealing with the East German government, that it was crucial to grapple with an elementary, if uncomfortable, fact about the inter-German relationship. The GDR was always a much more effective negotiator of German-German affairs than its small size would suggest,<sup>30</sup> and excessive pressure on the SED regime could have quickly

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<sup>28</sup>Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED: IV 2/2.035/78. Document dated 5 September 1986.

<sup>29</sup>Stephen J. Silvia, "Left Behind: The Social Democratic Party in Eastern Germany," *West European Politics*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1993, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup>A. James McAdams, "Inter-German Relations in Historical Perspective: The Risks of Biased Hindsight," *German Politics*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 1994, p. 198.

proved counterproductive.<sup>31</sup> In fact, West German representatives tacitly acknowledged this constraint again and again in the 1970s and 1980s, for example in negotiations over the terms of inter-German trade, when they stopped short of applying full pressure on the GDR for fear that their adversaries would retaliate by drastically raising the costs of maintaining the relationship.

It was, however, the SPD's more accommodating "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* which caused the most critical assessments of its policy. Beginning with the refusal by the party to ratify the twin-track decision, the SPD concentrated more on security issues than the previous, largely humanitarian-based, *Ostpolitik*. The "second phase" of *Ostpolitik* involved formulating a partnership with the East German government which arguably gave more credence to its status as an independent sovereign state.

### **True Ambivalence**

This thesis has suggested that the relationship between the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist Unity Party can be viewed in two ways: as an example of an opposition party conducting foreign policy contrary to the government, and as such, attempting to influencing it; or as an example of something much larger which relates to the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe. Both of these examples are significant to study, and the reader is given the opportunity to examine each of these examples either separately or collectively within the chapters of this thesis. However, the aim of this thesis was to demonstrate that the SPD-SED "Common Dialogue" was part of a larger SPD strategy; a strategy which began with acceptance of the Berlin Wall with the purpose of recognizing the *status quo* in order to change it, and culminating in ambivalence when the *status quo* was finally overcome. As mentioned in the introduction, both in German and in English, the term ambivalence denotes some feature that is both good and bad at the same time, i.e., one single thing that has both negative and positive effects. Ambivalent does not mean merely having a good and a bad side; it means being good and bad through the same feature. Whether one agrees with the SPD's

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<sup>31</sup>On the power of small states in general, see Robert Keohane, "The big influence of small allies," *Foreign Policy*, no. 2, Spring 1971, pp. 161-182.

explanation for the dramatic events in 1989 and 1990, there are considerable grounds for an in-depth examination of the SPD-SED contacts in the 1980s.

The SPD and especially Egon Bahr developed their policies in an effort to accomplish two things: to reduce nuclear weapons in Europe and to bring the East and the West closer together so that war would be unthinkable. The SPD attempted to achieve the first of these policies with the chemical and nuclear free zone proposals in the early 1980s. The second of these policies (based on Egon Bahr's concept of "common security") the SPD attempted to achieve with the "Common Paper." Both of these SPD aspirations have been, in a way, achieved; however, they were not achieved by direct SPD involvement. Thus in order to justify the claim that the SPD was both effective and ineffective, a connection must be made. The connection lies in the influence of the three SPD-SED proposals, and specifically, the influence of "common security."

In Brandt's memoirs of 1989, he emphasized the influence of the Palme Commission, and of his own Brandt Commission, along with Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign and security policy. He argued that a straight line could be drawn from Palme to Gorbachev.<sup>32</sup> On this basis, Egon Bahr has suggested that his concept of "common security," which was the basis of the Palme Commission, influenced Gorbachev. Moreover, he asserts that it was "common security," as adopted by Gorbachev, which led to his reform policies, which led to the fall of Communism. In relation to this, the author asked Bahr this question: "Brandt had stated that there was a direct line from Palme to Gorbachev. Since the idea of "common security" was your idea, couldn't we also say from Bahr to Gorbachev?"

**Answer:** I don't want to be immodest here, but I can only say, yes. In my first talk with Gorbachev, which lasted two hours, he started to explain to me the idea of "common security." Of course, I did not tell him, "listen fellow (*hör mal Junge*), you don't need to do that, I know that better," but I just agreed with what he was saying. And after a half an hour, we were in complete agreement. ... After that, I talked to Yuri Arbatov, also a member of the Palme Commission, and told him that I was surprised that Gorbachev had explained "common security" to me. "I can explain that," he said, "I have been friends with Gorbachev for a long time, and I always informed him about the Palme Commission. And he has made these ideas his own and doesn't even know himself anymore where

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<sup>32</sup>Willy Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 1989, pp. 426-436.



they come from." And I said, "That's even better, if this is his own conviction he has arrived at himself, *na wunderbar!*"<sup>33</sup>

This assertion would imply that Bahr was a master politician; that he was able to influence foreign governments in order to achieve his political goals. However, this assumption would ignore the fact that the SPD's policies, under the guidance of Bahr, were developed on the assumption of recognizing the existence of the Soviet Union and the GDR and not on the elimination of them. For example, the "Common Paper," which was the cornerstone of the SPD-SED relationship in the 1980s, argued that both sides would have to prepare for a long period where they would have to exist side-by-side.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the paper also stated that no one side could "deny the other the right to exist" (*Existenzberechtigung*).<sup>35</sup>

In similar fashion, Bahr informed the author that, for him, the entire basis of the "Common Paper" was the realization that both systems existed: "There are both [systems] (*Es gibt beide*) ... There are these Communists, there are these Social Democrats."<sup>36</sup> However, despite the fact that SPD policies in the 1980s clearly championed the acceptance of the *status quo*, Bahr let it be known that he was always in favor of reunification.<sup>37</sup> Ash notes that the "characteristic intellectual feature of the inter-German relationship" was a paradox. A paradox by "accepting the *status quo* in order to overcome it; strengthening the regime in order to loosen its grip; not demanding German unity being the only means to achieve it." He adds, "so perhaps the architects of policy towards the GDR might enjoy this final paradox: they got it right because they got it wrong!"<sup>38</sup>

Adding to the debate is the other side of the ideological coin: the assertion that the Soviet Union was "arms raced to death."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Brandt also recognized the argument that another line could be drawn from Pershing to Gorbachev.<sup>40</sup> Ash recognized the confusion associated with this debate, when he noted "there are those who argue that it was Reagan's new-old policy of Cold War, rearmament

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<sup>33</sup> Author's question to Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>34</sup> Wolfgang Brinkel and Jo Rodejohann, *Das SPD-SED Papier*, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Burkard Koch, Berlin, 20 February 1995.

<sup>40</sup> Willy Brandt, *Erinnerungen*, 1989, pp. 426-436.

and, yes, the Strategic Defense Initiative - "star wars" - that compelled the decisive turn in Soviet foreign policy. And there are those who argue that, on the contrary, the true sources of "new thinking" are to be found in Western *détente* policies, in impulses that came from the peace movement and the parties gathered in the Socialist International."<sup>41</sup> Ash then asks the now famous question whether the events of 1989-90 occurred because of "SDI or SI?" Stephen Szabo stated, "It seems clear that Gorbachev's revival of *détente* had little to do with Western *détente* and much more to do with Western resolve combined with the failure of Communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe."<sup>42</sup> The author's research findings were able to find evidence for both assertions. Thus, adding to the ambivalence theme, the reference must be that all of the above factors, working together and opposing each other, which allowed for the dramatic events of 1989 and 1990.

This thesis has attempted to demonstrate the ambivalence of the SPD's policies by examining *Ostpolitik*, the "second phase" of *Ostpolitik*, Egon Bahr's notion of "common security," the SPD-SED contacts of the 1980s, and the fall of the GDR. As mentioned, these policies were all created to accomplish specific goals, which now in 1995, have become reality. Yet, because specific SPD goals have been achieved, does not mean that the pursuit of the aforementioned policies directly produced the ends mentioned. On the other hand, this thesis has shown that the influence of the SPD contributed to some of the "new thinking" in the West and in the East. However, the degree of this contribution will remain unknown because "influence" is an ambiguous concept. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why the policies of the SPD, especially in the 1980s, can be viewed as ambivalent. It can be argued that the SPD influenced the reform processes (through notions such as "common security") and, at the same time, hindered the processes (through concentrating its relationship with the Communist regimes). The ambivalence of the SPD's policies can be seen in relation to three main categories: (i) a reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe; (ii) reform in the GDR; (iii) and the reunification of Germany. In each of the categories mentioned, the SPD had a positive as well as a negative influence. It is important to realize that each of these categories are interconnected. In separating them below, however, one can better understand the true ambivalence of the SPD's policies.

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<sup>41</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup>Stephen F. Szabo, *The Changing Politics of German Security*, 1990, p. 93.

## The Fear of War

The SPD has too often associated the problems of instability in Europe with technical or military capabilities. It has had the tendency to believe that political tensions are the result of military forces while the opposite is in fact the case. A reduction in military forces could only be realized when the political causes of the East-West conflict were resolved. After the INF debate in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the SPD concentrated much of its efforts on security issues in the hope of lowering the tensions between the blocs and securing peace. Indeed, the first two SPD-SED proposals were created in the hope of reducing the threat of chemical and nuclear weapons in Europe respectively. The collapse of Communism and the reunification of Germany have been able to contribute more significantly to the achievement of these goals<sup>43</sup> than the two SPD-SED proposals; however, the proposals can be viewed as effective if they can indeed be shown to have influenced the policies of the superpowers. This is what the SPD argues today.

After 82, we wanted to maintain so many operational opportunities as possible while in opposition and [to] exert pressure on our own government to ensure that the continuation [of *Ostpolitik*] that Kohl had promised would be maintained ... there is a [nuclear] free zone now in the former GDR, from the North Cape to the Black Sea ... this idea could not have been too bad, [but] it was a little too early.<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, Karsten Voigt would claim in 1995 that the chemical and nuclear papers brought increased domestic pressures on the Kohl government.<sup>45</sup> He argued that the chemical-free zone proposal played a role in bringing about the

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<sup>43</sup>Specifically, the Two-Plus-Four Treaty of 1990 specified that the area of the former East Germany would no longer contain nuclear weapons. For this specification see Karl Kaiser, *Deutschlands Vereinigung: Die internationalen Aspekte*, 1991, pp. 260-268. As Peter Merkl stated in relation to the treaty, "[a]fter 1994, foreign troops and nuclear delivery systems could no longer be in the former GDR - only German conventional troops. In other words, The East German area would become a neutral and nuclear-free zone." See Peter Merkl, *German Unification in the European Context*, p. 357.

<sup>44</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995. This relates to the fact that, in the two plus four agreement of 1990, an accord was reached stating that nuclear weapons would not be stationed in the former GDR.

<sup>45</sup>Voigt stated that the U.S. was even considering modernizing their chemical weapons. He stated "they reached a point [in 1986] to either get rid of them or modernize ... the SPD stopped them!" Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 15 February 1995.



informal understanding between President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl in May 1986 when they concluded that the aging stock of American chemical weapons stored in Germany would be removed by 1992.<sup>46</sup> This influence must be counter-balanced, however, with the accusation that by dealing with the Communist leadership, the SPD may have, in fact, legitimized the totalitarian system on the basis that they had weapons of destruction.<sup>47</sup> As Wolfgang Drechsler stated:

I should add that I myself am inclined to fault the SPD for putting *Gesinnungsethik* below *Verantwortungsethik*, which governments might have to do, but not parties. The SPD is not only a community of interests, but also of ideas, because of which people who share them voluntarily associate. I did and do not think that it was really necessary to "trade with the enemy." As a community of ideas, if one deals one-to-one with a community which by its very definition is antagonistic to these ideas, one invalidates one's own basis. I hasten to say that I am sure that most of the supporters and creators of the papers were driven by very honorable motives, such as the fear of a nuclear holocaust. On the other hand, as one can see now and as one, I think, could see then, the papers had actually very little real impact at all. If much was to be lost but much could have been gained, it might have been worth the gamble. As it was, and without denying that there was a constructive side to it as well, both from today's and yesterday's perspective, I think the main effect the papers had was to further alienate mainstream SPD members and -voters from the party.<sup>48</sup>

The SPD's ambivalence lies with the positive influence it had over its own government and over East-West negotiations; yet the negative influence was that it legitimized the Communist system as a credible partner in security affairs. When the author asked Egon Bahr if he ever really trusted the SED he exclaimed, "Never! Never! It was totally clear from the very beginning that these were our opponents; they live on the separation [of Germany]; without separation, there is nothing. And there is only separation as long as the Russians want it. This is why we began to negotiate in Moscow and not in East Berlin."<sup>49</sup> In 1990, Karsten Voigt was able to realize his goal of a European Post Cold-War-order (*europäische Nachkriegsordnung*); not because of the chemical and nuclear-

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.. For this argument see also Jonathan Dean, "Changing Security Dimensions of the Inter-German Relationship," in F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Two German States and European Security*, 1989, pp. 169-170.

<sup>47</sup>This was the argument made by Gesine Schwan in her article "Ein Januskopf - Gefahren und Chancen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 September 1987.

<sup>48</sup>Interview with Wolfgang Drechsler, Marburg, 10 February 1995.

<sup>49</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.



weapons free zone proposals, but because of the collapse of Communism and the reunification of Germany.

## Reform

In the area of GDR reform, it is the author's view that the SPD-SED contacts exhibit much more than merely an appropriate, on one hand, or misguided attempt, on the other, on behalf of the SPD to lessen tensions (*Entspannung*) in Europe, as is argued in the debate today. By creating a reform discussion both within the SED (especially in certain in lower circles) and outside of it, it contributed to the fall of the GDR. Yet, at the same time, this very rumoring gave the people within and without the SED the impression that it was capable of reform, which it is safe to say, it was not, and so perhaps prolonged the GDR's existence. Furthermore, SPD leaders may have inadvertently helped to strengthen the GDR's Communist government, by giving it the recognition and international acceptance that it sought in the 1980s.

This recognition, and the reliance on change from above, have, in fact, been two of the most telling criticisms of the SPD's Eastern policy by representatives of the former Eastern German opposition. Stephen Silvia argued that "by the 1980s ... West German leftists ... [denounced] any critics of the East German state as reactionary, dangerous Cold Warriors. Thus, the West German SPD leadership began increasingly to discourage any contact from within the party ranks with dissidents in the GDR and Central Europe for fear that such contacts could undo the successes of the SPD's *Ostpolitik*."<sup>50</sup> "Many West German leaders," Rainer Eppelmann has noted, "came to the conclusion that maintaining peace was more important than supporting freedom. They thought they were going to have to live with the East German regime for many years, and so they treated Honecker almost the same way they treated the President of France or the Prime Minister of

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<sup>50</sup>Stephen J. Silvia, "Left Behind: The Social Democratic Party in Eastern Germany," *West European Politics*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1993, p. 29-30; see also Andrie Markovits, "The West German Left in a Changing Europe: Between Intellectual Stagnation and Redefining Identity," in Christiane Lemke and Gary Marks (eds), *The Crisis of Socialism in Europe*, 1992, p. 171; Moreover, Polish dissidents have repeatedly accused the SPD of staging a decade-long boycott against Solidarity in order to preserve good relations with the Polish Communist leadership; see *Tageszeitung*, 21 December 1989.

Britain."<sup>51</sup> Bärbel Bohley, another outspoken former dissident, has been even more critical of the SPD's exclusive reliance upon negotiations with the SED élite and the neglect of the GDR opposition. Echoing Stephan Hilsberg's accusations mentioned in the sixth chapter, Bohley stated: "We were always there, but we weren't taken seriously."<sup>52</sup> When the author explained this criticism to Bahr, he illustrated, that aside from the GDR, "the only reform from below came in Warsaw and Prague, and that in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Soviet Union it did not come from below."<sup>53</sup> However, Dieter Dowe argued that in relying on change in the GDR to come from above, the SPD ignored what it meant to be "Social Democratic." "Socialism by definition," he asserted, "means being in touch with society."<sup>54</sup>

In arguing that the SPD influenced reform in the GDR, the party relies on the impact of its *détente* policies and more specifically the impact of the "Common Paper" of 1987. The "Common Paper" which is based on "common security" stated that both parties would contribute to a peaceful and open dialogue, both between themselves and within their own respective states. Here lies the heart of the argument. Did the SPD contribute to reform within the GDR because the latter agreed to contribute to a peaceful and open dialogue or did it not? The author has found conflicting reports; however, in examining the SED archive files, there seems to be convincing evidence that this paper and the ideas within it were affecting the GDR leadership. There is ample evidence on both sides, as mentioned in the previous chapters. However, it is true that the most crucial challenges were coming from Moscow and not the SPD. Yet, as mentioned earlier, Egon Bahr would argue that this "new thinking" in Moscow was also a by-product of SPD, or rather his own, policy. In his final comments to the author on this issue, Bahr claimed that the opposition leader (now SPD member of the *Bundestag* from Brandenburg) Steffen Reiche came into his office in October 1989 and stated "we can't find the SPD-SED paper anymore ... we need it." He explained that this was the prime example of the effectiveness of the "Common

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<sup>51</sup> See Eppelmann's interview with Stephen Kinzer, in the *New York Times*, June 7, 1992.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995. See also the same remark in *Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993, p. 38.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Dieter Dowe, Bonn, 16 February 1995.

Paper." Bahr then explained that he distributed 5000 copies of the paper throughout the GDR in an attempt to facilitate the opposition's call for reform.<sup>55</sup>

## Reunification

SPD proponents of the idea that the German Question was, for all intents and purposes, closed, based their arguments primarily on their perceptions of German and European realities (and concomitant requirements for peace). They simply saw no chance that reunification could ever be achieved, especially given Soviet resistance to any such effort, but also the reluctance of other European states to have the *status quo* in Europe changed so drastically. The longer the division of Germany lasted, they believed, the more acceptable it would eventually become to the Germans themselves. From this perspective, the German Question could no longer be considered open. After reunification, the party's close association with the East German Communists suddenly looked ineffective and immoral as both the SED and Communism collapsed. A debate within the party began over whether the SPD should go from *Wandel durch Annäherung* to *Wandel durch Abstand*, that is to change through opposition to the SED.<sup>56</sup>

Burkhard Koch argued that in 1989, the SPD made their biggest mistake in relation to the upheavals in the GDR. By not forcing the split of the SED and ignoring the social democratized members in the SED, the party lost all influence there.<sup>57</sup> He argued that the SPD could have kept the a Communist party as well as forming a separate SPD. Thus the Communist party could have been a scapegoat party and the SPD could have been a safe haven for the rest. He stated, "I even told Wolfgang Thierse this, but he said no."<sup>58</sup> Koch argued that later the SPD could have formed a coalition and perhaps won the election in 1990. "Now they have to reckon with the PDS ... why? Because they never truly believed in reunification; they also thought, until March 1990, that they could win the election anyway. They had no vision." His points appear valid when considering the fact that many of the newly formed Social-Democratic parties in East European states

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<sup>55</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>56</sup>Norbert Gansel, "Wenn alle gehen wollen, weil die Falschen bleiben," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 13 September 1989.

<sup>57</sup>Interview with Burkard Koch, Berlin, 20 February 1995.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

helped form the governments in their respective countries following the collapse of Communism. He added, "they missed their old dream of a social-democratized Europe developed in the 1920s."<sup>59</sup>

The "Common Paper" can be seen as a microcosm of Social Democratic policy in relation to the collapse of East Germany and German reunification. The "Common Paper," as mentioned earlier, was based on accepting the *status quo*. It arguably went a long way to reinforce the impression that the SPD saw no real hope for reunification. Despite this impression, many members of the SPD argue today that the "Common Paper" had as its final goal, not just "common security," but the victory of western values over the dictatorial regime in the East. Egon Bahr argued just that in response to the question "if you could, would you change anything within the SPD-SED paper today?" "I would not [change something]," he stated. "Basically, one can say that the paper has fulfilled its historic mission. Separation is no more, the Soviet Union is no more, the SED is no more, mission accomplished. We have contributed to this. The paper has contributed to this."<sup>60</sup> Indeed this is a big jump to make. To argue that the "historic mission" of the "Common Paper" was to end separation is difficult to detect when examining the paper in detail (see chapter four). However, in following Bahr's argument, it nevertheless could be argued that the "Common Paper" contributed to the reunification of Germany because it contributed to some internal struggles within the SED party ranks (as the SED archive files indicate) which may have forced the SED to view a peaceful transition process in late 1989 as the only viable option. Also, it hindered this "goal" because it allowed the SED leadership to be seen as reformable, which, as has been argued, it was not.

Finally, the culminating and most heated argument within Germany regarding the SPD-SED relationship is that it legitimized the SED's dictatorial regime. Timothy Garton Ash argued, in a tongue and cheek manner, that one could suggest with hindsight that the policies of West Germany following the tenets of *Ostpolitik* in the 1980s were "a magnificent piece of long-term strategic deception. ... Destabilization through stabilization! Precisely by allowing the Honecker leadership to continue without reforms,"<sup>61</sup> the policy based on small steps had

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Interview with Egon Bahr, Bonn, 17 February 1995.

<sup>61</sup>Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, 1993, p. 204.



actually facilitated the downfall of the GDR. On one hand, defenders of the SPD-SED relations argue that the debate encouraged reform in East Germany and facilitated a peaceful incorporation of the eastern *Länder* to the West (reunification); yet, critics maintain the contacts had the opposite effect. It is the author's contention that the SPD contacts with the ruling SED leadership hindered reform within East Germany and the eventual reunification of Germany because it stabilized not simply the SED command structure, but also stabilized the legitimation of the socialist state. As for the accusation that the SPD's policies stabilized the GDR, Egon Bahr had one clean cut answer: "Nobody in Bonn, if his name was now Adenauer, Brandt, or Kohl, could more strongly have stabilized Ulbricht or Honecker, as did the 20 Soviet divisions and the Warsaw Pact (*Niemand in Bonn, ob er nun Adenauer, Brandt oder Kohl hieß, konnte Ulbricht oder Honecker stärker stabilisieren, als es 20 sowjetische Divisionen und der Warschauer Pakt taten*).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Die Ost- und Deutschlandpolitik der SPD in der Opposition, 1982-1989; *Papiere eines Kongresses der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung am 14. 15. September 1993 in Bonn*, 1993.

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## Author's Interviews

### SPD Members and Dates

Egon Bahr	17 February 1995
Hanno Drechsler	12 February 1995
Stephan Hilsberg	18 February 1995

Thomas Meyer	9 February 1995
Karsten D. Voigt	15 February 1995

**Non-Members and Dates**

Dieter Dowe	16 February 1995
Wolfgang Drechsler	10 February 1995
Burkhard Koch	20 February 1995
Ann Phillips	15 February 1995
Ivar Tallo	23 February 1995